

THE
M A N
OF
F A I L I N G:
A T A L E,
IN TWO VOLUMES.

—————" Rail not, ye virtuous minds!
" For he, like you, was friendly and sincere
" Tow'rds the cause of Virtue. Now he's shipwreck'd,
" To save thee from that fate : set as a mark,
" To warn thee of dangers, shoals and quicksands,
" Where Virtue oft is lost."—————

VOL. II.

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T H E

MAN OF FAILING.

THE coach had not drove far before it stopped to take up two more passengers, who were no other than Mr. and Mrs. Spruce. This meeting foreboded little pleasure on either side during their journey; for Nelson felt himself in an awkward situation when he reflected on a circumstance that was still deeply imprinted on his memory. Mrs. Spruce could not be

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supposed to be in a more comfortable situation; and her husband had still less reason than either to enjoy the prospect of much pleasure in the journey, being conscious of a circumstance, which, though it was unknown to Nelson, rendered him despicable in his own eyes. The reader will be convinced that he had reason to be dissatisfied with his situation, when he is informed that it was he that basely waylaid Nelson, as he returned from seeing Syntax, and used him in such a barbarous manner.

An awkward silence reigned for a few minutes, till the fourth passenger (who was a lady) broke it by observing, "that she believed
" she

“ she had got into the company of
“ three Quakers.” Nelson, who
wished not to remember old ani-
mosities, or disagreeable circum-
stances, was glad of the oppor-
tunity which the lady gave him to
enter into discourse: the conver-
sation presently became general,
and in a little time they were all
as social as if they had been very
much pleased with one another.
Nothing happened in the first two
or three stages worth taking notice
of; only Nelson observed that
Mr. Spruce appeared very indiffe-
rent to his wife, and very atten-
tive to the other lady; whose
notice he endeavoured to obtain
by ogles and frequent attempts to
be witty. Mrs. Spruce, on her

B 2

part,

part, seemed not to be offended with her husband for his attention to the other, but allowed him all the freedom he could possibly wish. She directed her conversation to Nelson, who for some time was rather absent; for his thoughts were a long way behind him: they had not left the beloved spot from which he had recently parted; for he was entertaining himself with the ideas in what manner Rachel would be passing her time after his departure.

Mrs. Spruce remarked his absence of thought, and rightly guessed at the cause. And as she still loved him in her heart, notwithstanding all that had happened, she was vexed at the thoughts of
his

his being attached to another in preference to herself. Her being the wife of Mr. Spruce, was certainly a strong argument against his thinking of her at all; but it did not appear altogether so to her, for her notions were not so confined as those of Nelson, who looked upon a woman to be forbidden fruit, when once she had plighted herself to another. She justified herself for allowing her heart to indulge a partiality for Nelson, by her husband's conduct to the other lady. This, though it is a very lame excuse, has been laid hold of by thousands before her; as if the law of retaliation had been a part of their creed, or

the best way of regaining their husband's lost affection.

Her intention was only to mortify Mr. Spruce for his apparent neglect. If she had gone no farther, her conduct would not have been severely blameable. She was not aware, that a feigned appearance of gallantry has often dangerous consequences;—it betrays people into situations which often prove fatal. Nelson's absence of mind innocently helped to deceive her; for she thought herself safe in pursuing her revenge, by the help of one that appeared to take so little advantage of it.

He would have been dull indeed, if he had not observed her behaviour

viour during the course of the day ; which, if he had been a man of gallantry, would have given him the greatest pleasure : but in place of that, he felt a confounded deal of vexation, for his imagination represented the smallest deviation to gallantry, as an unpardonable sin against his beloved Rachel—more especially as he had but just parted from her. These considerations would have saved them both, if Mr. Spruce's officious gallantry had not given them a fatal opportunity of being left together in an hour of inebriation.

When they arrived at Maidenhead, the lady that accompanied them, being within a mile of her journey's end, was going to bid

them adieu; but Mr. Spruce obliged her almost by force to stay and sup with them, promising to see her safe home after supper. What his intentions were, we will not pretend to say; but after supper he plied the wine so briskly round, that before the lady rose to be gone, Nelson was almost drunk. In this situation, Mr. Spruce left him to entertain his wife till his return.

Nelson had as much sense left as to perceive himself in the situation which he most dreaded; and the consciousness of this made him blush. Mrs. Spruce rallied him upon his modesty, till it appeared ridiculous in his own eyes. He endeavoured to get rid of it, and
for

for that purpose unhappily fell into the contrary extreme. What a critical situation for two persons, who had loved, and indulged their unruly passions once before, to fall into again! A miracle only could have saved them from the consequence that followed; but Heaven did not think meet to interpose in the concerns of those who blindly rushed upon fresh guilt, after the fatal experience they had had already.

In short, they were as much infatuated as they had been before. Mrs. Spruce forgot that she had a husband: and Nelson lost all ideas of his beloved Rachel, till remorse dispelled the short delirium of his passion, and restored him to his

B 5 senses.

senses. Then it was he felt the stings of agonizing conscience in their full force; his crime on one hand, and Rachel on the other; one holding up to him the vengeance of Heaven, and the other looking on him with scorn and contempt. Heaven already seemed to execute the vengeance which conscience threatened him with; for at that moment the lightning flashed in his eyes, and the thunder rolled over his head in an awful and tremendous manner. The partner of his guilt was so much frightened, that she fainted away. It however served as an excuse for the remorse she felt, and the tears she shed when she was restored to her senses.—This, perhaps, was the only

only thing that made her consider it as a crime; so much were her principles poisoned with libertine notions.

Nelson had agreed to remain all night at the Inn, and to accompany Mr. and Mrs. Spruce the remainder of their journey in a post-chaise; but this unhappy circumstance obliged him to alter his resolution, and to go off in the same stage at four o'clock in the morning; for he had not the courage to sit in company with her, or to look her injured husband in the face without blushing.

This resolution he put in practice, after he had informed them, that business obliged him to be in London as soon as possible. Mrs.

Spruce endeavoured to persuade him to remain till next day, but in vain. Mr. S. knew his reasons, and therefore did not persuade him one way or another. They gave him a direction to their lodgings in London, begging him to call often. This Nelson promised, but inwardly resolved never to enter their door.

Luckily there was not a passenger in the stage but himself; so that he had an opportunity of indulging his miserable reflections till he arrived at his journey's end; and to take solemn resolutions against drinking, and every thing that had a tendency to lead him into the like crimes again.—The reader, perhaps, may laugh at Nelson's

son's unfashionable notion, in repenting so bitterly of an action which is rather considered as a matter of triumph; or, at most, as but a small venial transgression; especially as Mrs. S. was in the bloom of youth and beauty: but let that person consider, that Nelson was ardently attached to an amiable and virtuous woman, of whom every action of a criminal nature rendered him unworthy, and he will see cause for repentance as well as Nelson; and reason to put himself on the guard against falling into like misdemeanours for the future. - Nelson's heart was also naturally virtuous; and where that is the case, repentance

ance will assuredly follow actions so opposite.

The new and various scenes that were presented to his view in London, by degrees lessened the bitterness of his reflections; and he allowed his breast to be restored to tranquillity, with the hopes that his crime would be for ever buried from the knowledge of Miss Seymour, and be a warning to him in an hour of danger for the future.

He found a kind reception in the house of his Rachel's uncle, who was taught to look upon him as a nephew; for her father had given him a hint of their affection, in the letter which he sent along with

with Nelson. Mr. Seymour in London, was just such another as her father; so that Nelson found no difference in the kindness of their behaviour; for this, as well as the other, did every thing in his power to render his situation pleasant and happy. There was only one thing wanting to make that perfectly so, and that was the company of his dear Rachel; who, in his idea, stood far superior to every woman he had yet seen in London, although decked in the splendour of finery, and all the allurements of art.

FILIAL SENSATION.

A few months after his arrival in London, the clergyman before-mentioned, ushered into the world a new work that excited universal notice. The plan of this new work was intirely novel; obscenity was one of its principal ingredients; but that was mostly conveyed in far-fetched ideas and intricate allusions: for vice would be frightful if it did not wear a mask. If it had been all disguised, the world might have read the work without edification; but, unhappily, there were some parts of it so naked, or the covering so easily seen through, that it served as a key to the rest; and the reader
went

went in the full expectation, that in this point of view, the story was uniform and consistent; and even would find, or suppose, indelicate allusions in a paragraph that the author never intended to convey any thing of the nature.

Nelson was favoured with a reading of this work by young Seymour, a cousin of his Rachel's; and as the author's name was not affixed to the book, he had not the least suspicion that it was one so nearly connected with himself; and therefore, upon his returning it, censured the vulgar indelicacies of the author, with that indignation which they deserved; and which every virtuous mind must feel at reading descriptions so
fatally

fatally injurious to the morals of youth.

“ He allowed the author to be
“ possessed of a first-rate genius,
“ but lamented that it was so un-
“ happily misapplied. If he had
“ confined his talents to pathetic
“ descriptions, and made the
“ cultivation of morality and
“ virtue his aim, he would have
“ excited the passions to laudable
“ purposes, and been rewarded
“ with the grateful applause of the
“ worthy part of mankind; an
“ applause of superlative value,
“ compared to that which he will
“ receive from those that can
“ admire his obscene trash; and
“ by whom it will be made use of

“ as

“as a pimp to furnish them with
 “impure and indelicate ideas.”

Young Seymour laughed at Nelson's *virtuous* warmth, and told him, that the author was a clergyman, whose sermons were admired for inculcating pure religion and morality.

Nelson's indignation was augmented by this information; but it was presently changed to the most bitter grief, when the origin of his being was named as the author.

“Heaven forbid,” said he, when alone, “that I should be so nearly
 “allied to one, that so wantonly
 “administers the most deadly
 “poison to the morals of his fellow
 “creatures!—Can he who so vehemently
 “mently

"mently exclaims against slander-
 "ers, [Vide his Fifth Sermon]
 'who send large portions of in-
 'nocence and chastity out of the
 'world by distant hints and nods,'
 "be himself a thousand times more
 "execrable, by *really* destroying
 "that innocence and chastity which
 "a slanderer *only* maliciously *hints*
 "to be lost! All lewdness is bad
 "enough, but clerical obscenity is
 "intolerable."

This information made his re-
 flexions very disagreeable; for
 though he wished not to be ac-
 knowledged as the offspring of
 that reverend gentleman, yet he
 felt that filial affection for him in
 his breast, which a son naturally has
 for his parent. How shocking,
 therefore,

therefore, to find this parent keenly labouring for a character that is hateful in any one, but doubly detestable in a Christian Divine! Although he could reap no honour by acknowledging him for a parent, yet he was anxious to see one to whom he owed the origin of his coming into the world. He procured information of the coffee-house that he frequented; to which he went with an agitated heart.

As soon as he got there, he sat down in the first box that presented itself (for his feet could hardly support him into the room); and calling for a pint of wine, he took up a newspaper as if going to read, but knew no more than an infant
what

what it contained; for his whole frame was agitated, and his ears entirely taken up in listening to those around him, in expectation of hearing something that would point out the object that he wished to behold.

He did not wait long for this gratification, for that gentleman entered in a few minutes; and was welcomed by a grinning smile from every face save that of Nelson, whose eyes were instantly rivetted to the sacred features of his parent, in which he discovered so great a likeness of his own, that he was deprived of every doubt that had hitherto arisen in his mind respecting the possibility of his mother's being under a mistake.

While

While his eyes were anxiously exploring the inmost recesses of his parent's heart, and his breast throbbing with filial tenderness, his ears were saluted with the sound of his voice. What did not Nelson feel at that moment? But, just Heaven! how was he shocked, and his soul harrowed with the most bitter grief, at hearing that voice convey to his ears language still more openly offensive than what he had wrote!

Nelson was immediately rising up to make his escape from a place where the ear of chastity was deeply wounded; but hearing a subject started, whose sacred nature rendered it almost impossible to introduce indelicate ideas, he sat down
again,

again, fondly hoping to hear his parent launch forth with serious warmth upon a subject that ought to be sacred to a clerical character.

But here he was grievously disappointed also ; for the subject was started on purpose to be turned into ridicule, by this clerical buffoon, who began to display his wit by blending obscenity with scripture, as if they had been similar to one another. Nelson was more shocked than before ; and hurried out of the place, with a silent ejaculation that Heaven had made him the son of an honest cobbler, or of the meanest mechanic, rather than the offspring of one, whom it would be almost infamy to acknowledge !

He

He had only been a witness to a small specimen of his father's talents. The employment of that gentleman, and the chief pleasure of his life, seemed to be more directed to corrupt the morals of youth, than to reap the fruit of his labours by debauchery. The first he was always qualified for; the last he was made incapable of, through the feebleness of his constitution. If that had been corresponding to the strong bent of his mind, he, perhaps, would have exceeded every one in his debaucheries, as much as he did in the original stile of his writings. His imagination was quick and lively, and he always gave it free scope to the bounds of licentious-

ness. Every thing that presented itself, however filthy and indelicate, or wide from the subject, if it tended to excite a laugh, was noted down without shame, or a fear of future consequences. The reason why he has not been followed by a successful imitator, among the many pretenders, may be, because there was not one of them possessed of an equal genius, who dared go the length that he did in unveiling the filth of an impure imagination.

Nelson had seen enough of his father's leading principles, to fill his mind with disagreeable reflections: for some weeks they gave him great uneasiness. He wrote the Quaker an account of the suc-
cess

cess of his curiosity ; lamenting the distress it had given him, and wishing he had not gratified it, because it had raised antipathy in his mind against one whom nature teaches us to respect with sacred veneration.

Time, however, restored him to his natural cheerfulness, and made him again become the agreeable friend and entertaining companion : his company was courted by youth of both sexes, and by none more than young Seymour, the cousin of his dear Rachel.

MODERN FRIENDSHIP.

This gentleman, though he was a Quaker, was a young man of

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debauched

debauched principles: but he had so carefully concealed them under a mask of religion, that he was looked upon by all to be a youth of an exemplary and virtuous disposition. Nelson looked upon him in this light, and was eager to cultivate an intimacy with him. Had Seymour continued his hypocrisy after this confidence and intimacy took place between them, there would have been no danger: but Nelson's good-nature and cheerful temper pleased him so much, that he wished to make him a partner and companion in his scenes of lewdness, as well as in his innocent recreations.—A most detestable proof of his friendship! but, alas! too often followed by

by the youth of our day; who are not content to be vicious themselves, but draw those whom they love most into the same destructive path. Seymour knew Nelson too well, to think he would accompany him to such places of his own accord: he therefore determined to betray him into them unawares; and even gave the objects of lewdness a hint of his intentions, that they might second his *friendly* design with their artful inticements.

Pretending, one evening, that he was going to visit a young lady, for whom he had a virtuous attachment, he prevailed upon Nelson to accompany him. He carried him to an elegant lodging near the

West end of the Town, where they were ushered into a splendid apartment, and received by an elderly lady, who gave Seymour the appellation of son. Nelson immediatly concluded her to be the mother of his sweetheart. The old lady ordered a servant to bring wine, &c. and then left them, after promising to send up her daughters. During the interval Seymour plied Nelson briskly with red port; but after drinking a few glasses, recollecting the fatal consequences of a former inebriation, the latter refused to drink more.

Presently after, two elegant females made their appearance, whom Seymour respectively saluted,
and

and introducing our hero, desired him to follow his example. Nelson saluted them with a modest politeness, believing them to be ladies of character and reputation.

The ladies then sat down, and, after a little affectation of backwardness, were prevailed upon to drink a glass also. Nelson was then ashamed to decline drinking any longer; he therefore drank glass for glass with them till his head was quite giddy. The ladies were all life and spirit in the mean time, and kept up a brisk conversation upon different subjects. The only thing that struck Nelson, was to see them drink so freely, and occasionally use expressions rather indelicate for a female: but these

he attributed to the custom of the place; he never once dreamt, that they were two of those miserable wretches who prostitute themselves to the brutal passions of every wretch that can give them their hire.

Presently Seymour began to take a few liberties with one of them, which she affected to oppose; but by degrees they fell to downright romping. Nelson and the other in the mean time were only spectators of the fun, save that now and then she would tread gently upon his toes, as if by accident, and make use of a thousand other alluring arts of which she was complete mistress. These had a wonderful effect upon our almost intoxicated hero;

hero ; whose virtue vanished by degrees, and at last totally left him to the guidance of his unruly passion. Then he suffered himself to follow Seymour's example, by romping with the other, and proceeded such lengths, that Seymour conceived him beyond the danger of a relapse, and therefore drew his partner out of the room. This was the moment for the infamous wretch to play off her master-piece of arts ; which she did so effectually, that the infatuated youth was quite vanquished, and yielding to her arms. The shrieks of a female from an adjoining room saved him from the pit of destruction, into which another minute would have plunged him perhaps for ever.

The screams awakened him from his delirium; and he then saw the danger he had escaped, and trembled with horror. The infamous wretch began to encourage him again to venture upon the precipice, telling him "it was only the noise of her sister and Seymour." But Nelson was now quite sober, and fully convinced of the character of his partner, and the place he was in: he therefore pushed her from him with disgust, and was retreating out of the house, after throwing half a guinea upon the table, to pay for the wine; when his ears were a second time saluted with shrieks louder and more piercing than before.

It

It instantly struck his mind, that some young and innocent female had been betrayed to the place, as well as himself; and the angelic innocence of his Rachel coming across his thoughts, raised his rage against seducers to the highest pitch. He immediately laid hold of the first weapon he saw; and rushing to the apartment from whence the screams issued, he vigorously applied his foot to one of the pannels, and shivered it in a thousand pieces.

THE RESCUE.

The first object he beheld was a female struggling with a man, who

by his masculine size made her appear like a pigeon in the talons of an eagle.

"Monster!" cried Nelson, with a voice of terror, "let go your hold."

"Presuming puppy!" cried the other, "vanish this minute;" and at the same time snatching the poker, made a stroke at Nelson's head, who dexterously avoided it, and gave him a blow with his fist that laid him sprawling on the floor. He then took the lady by the hand; but finding her in a swoon, he did not stay to satisfy himself whether she was innocent or guilty, but lifted her in his arms, and carried her out of the house; none of its inhabitants daring

ing to oppose his passage. When he got into the street, he did not know where to dispose of his charge; but seeing a public-house, at a little distance, he carried her to it, and, by the landlady's assistance, had the pleasure of seeing the lady restored to life.

When the unhappy lady was informed by Nelson of the manner of his rescuing her, she loaded him with a thousand thanks, and almost fell upon her knees to adore him. He answered, "he had been betrayed into the house himself, but should reckon it the most fortunate circumstance of his life, if he had been the means of saving innocence."

His

His speech made her burst into tears. "Alas, Sir," said she, deeply sighing, "you will regret your trouble when you come to know that I can lay no claim to that invaluable treasure. A base relation, under an assumed appearance of love and esteem; unhappily gained my affection; and in confidence of his honour and vows, I was prevailed upon to trust him with that and my happiness. Till yesterday I thought myself secure in his promises."

THE COUSINS.

“ An uncle, on whom we had
“ both dependance, was taken
“ very ill, and wrote for me a few
“ days ago to come to London,
“ as he wished to see me before
“ he died.—This treacherous re-
“ lation offered to be my escort,
“ which I accepted; but in place
“ of carrying me to my uncle’s
“ house, he brought me to that
“ place of infamy, under the
“ pretence that we were too late
“ to find admittance at my uncle’s.
“ Here, by means of intoxicating
“ drugs mixed with wine, he
“ deprived me of reason, and gave
“ me

“me up to the brutal mercy of
“an infamous companion.

“You can imagine my intole-
“rable grief and shame, better
“than I can tell you, when I found
“myself lying beside one that was
“an entire stranger. At that in-
“stant I could have put an end to
“my life.

“I was confined in this infam-
“ous house the whole day; during
“which time I did not allow a
“morsel of any thing to go down
“my throat, for I was determined
“to starve myself to death; seeing
“nothing but reproach and shame
“staring me in the face. My
“treacherous relation did not
“return till night; and being
“drunk,

"drunk, he began to use me like
"a strumpet; which obliged me
"to shriek out in the manner you
"heard, when Heaven sent you
"to my rescue."

When she had ended her unhappy story, Nelson, conjecturing that avarice had been her cousin's inducement for behaving in such a villainous manner, on purpose to injure her in the opinion of her uncle, and detain her from sight of him, advised her to go to her uncle's immediately, as a moment's delay might be of bad consequences.

It was with some difficulty that Miss Walton (for such was her name) could be prevailed upon to follow his advice, being so much
afraid

afraid of facing her uncle ; lest, her worthless relation having preposessed him against her, she should be turned out from him with disgrace. At last, however, she mustered up courage enough to accompany Nelson ; who obligingly offered her his evidence against her villainous betrayer.

After the lady had taken a little refreshment, they sat out together in a hackney coach to her uncle's house in the Strand. As soon as they got there, Nelson sent up a message to the old gentleman, who was very bad, asking permission for a few minutes conversation upon the most important business.

The servant that carried this message, informing her uncle that
the

the gentleman who sent it was accompanied by a young lady, who appeared to be very much distressed, immediately suspected her to be his niece, and returned for answer, "If the gentleman came on Nancy Walton's account, he may save himself all further trouble, for he utterly disclaimed all connection with her."

When Miss Walton heard this message, she fainted away.—After seeing her return to her senses, Nelson left her to the care of a female servant; and then insisted upon another one to shew him to her master's apartment, for he was determined to convince him of the treachery of his nephew before he left the house.

The

The housekeeper shewed him to the room where he lay. The old gentleman was very weak, yet he raised himself a little upon Nelson's entrance; and taking him to be an attorney that his nephew had gone for to alter his will, by cutting off his niece from all share of his effects, he asked him "what was become of his nephew?"

Nelson undeceived him at once; and briefly introduced his business, by recapitulating the story of his nephew's treachery, as he had heard it from Miss Walton, and relating the circumstance to which he had been an eye witness himself.

He delivered this account with such honest warmth and indignation.

tion against the author of the infamous treachery, as struck conviction and rage into the mind of old Mr. Walton, who compared the accounts with some suspicious circumstances he had observed himself. The housekeeper also confirmed it, by presenting him with a letter which she had found, and which his nephew had dropped out of his pocket. This letter conveyed positive proof of his nephew's treacherous conduct: for it gave an account of his shame, exactly corresponding with what Nelson had informed him.

The old gentleman, who was of a choleric disposition, was so much exasperated, that his passion threw him into convulsions. Nelson immediately

immediately sent for Miss Walton : but the old man was dead before she got up stairs ; for his rage, having overpowered his small strength, choked him in a few minutes.

A few minutes after this melancholy event, the treacherous cousin arrived, accompanied with an attorney. The former was thunderstruck at the sight of Miss Walton and Nelson, whose face he instantly knew. Guilt made him involuntarily start back ; but recovering himself again, he approached the bed of the dead man without taking notice of either of them.

It is easier to conceive than to describe his looks, when the nurse stopped him by informing him that

his

his uncle was dead. His disappointment threw his features into a hundred different contortions: he even wept with vexation; which he endeavoured to lay to the account of his grief for his uncle's death.

He knew too well the light in which he was considered by Miss Walton, to hope for forgiveness: he therefore did not attempt to effect a reconciliation with her; but slunk out of the room, after leaving some directions with the housekeeper.

After the housekeeper had informed Miss Walton, that she could be accommodated in the house, Nelson saw he could not be of farther service for the present,
and

and therefore took his leave. As he hastened home, he could not help reflecting on the providential event of Seymour's betraying him into a place of infamy. If it had not been for this, he would not have forgiven him so easily as he did.

That gentleman got home before Nelson, for whose arrival he waited with great impatience; because he was anxious to prevent him from giving information of their adventure. He met Nelson as he entered the door, and by intreaties prevailed upon him to bury it in his own breast; swearing it was the first time he had been in a house of that kind, and that he had done it in a frolic to try Nelson's

son's continency. Nelson did not credit all this as gospel: nevertheless, he forgave him on account of the service it had done to Miss Walton, of whose affairs he gave Seymour an account; but did not tell him her name or place of residence, out of regard to her reputation.

He still thought himself obliged to attend to that poor lady's concerns; and therefore attended upon her as often as opportunity would admit. He took care to see her put in possession of one half of her uncle's fortune, which he lodged for her in the stocks.

After the disposal of her uncle's effects, she took lodgings in a tradesman's house in the Strand,

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because she preferred living in London, where she was not known, rather than return to the country among her friends; where she would be in continual apprehension of having her imprudence known, which would subject her to many mortifications.

A CONVERT.

She lived in a very retired manner; for that was suited to the melancholy disposition of her mind, which was continually brooding over her imprudence, and the stain it had thrown upon her character. She seldom saw any one except Nelson, the tradesman's wife, and her

her own maid servant. This last was what is commonly called an old maid. Like her mistress, she had made a slip in her youth; and being deserted by her false swain, she took a disgust at all the male kind; and henceforth applied her mind to religion, and the reading of enthusiastical books, which settled and unsettled her principles almost every month. At last she wholly conformed herself to the absurd notions and enthusiastical practices of the methodists; and, like them, had her *spiritual feelings* and ecstatic faintings, upon hearing a *savoury* discourse from a favourite preacher.

Miss Walton's melancholy mind was a good soil for Martha

to sow her religious absurdities in; for one of this disposition is more apt than any other to swallow the gross absurdities of that enthusiastical set; because the Christian perfection which *they* attain, comforts, and makes them forget all their former imperfections. "The greater sinner, the better saint," is their old and common adage.

Martha's zeal was not thrown away upon Miss Walton; for in a little time she brought her to prefer John Wesley's Journals, and the Foundry Saint's Spiritual Experiences, to the books of amusement which Nelson had lent her to dispel the melancholy of her mind. Martha's books at last came to be her morning, noon, and evening studies;

studies; but in place of lessening her despondency, they only helped to make her melancholy more distressing and injurious to her health.

There was another principal cause of her dejection, which both Nelson and Martha were totally unacquainted with: this was, a secret passion which the former had innocently inspired her with.

His humane and attentive endeavours to make her happy, and his disinterested conduct in managing her affairs, added to his intellectual goodness and agreeable temper, were the means of inspiring her with this passion. She, at first, imagined that it was only gratitude which she felt for him;

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but every day gave her cause to fear that it was of a more tender nature. I say fear, because she was perfectly convinced, that however generous and obliging Nelson might be in his attention to her interest, yet he would never think of her in the character of a lover, after knowing that her character was so much stained by her own indiscretion.

This hopeless passion had all along preyed upon her mind, and contributed as much to her melancholy, and the impairing of her constitution, as any thing beside.

A DISCOVERY.

A few weeks after Martha had made a convert of her to methodism, she was so much weakened in her constitution, that she was entirely confined to her bed; which deprived her of the company of Nelson; a circumstance that gave her great uneasiness. Martha observed this, and immediately suspected that love was the cause of her illness, and that only a return of that passion from him could save her. She next day took an opportunity of hinting the affair to Nelson himself, not in the least doubting but that he would receive the news with transport.

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She,

She, however, was deceived; for, in place of hearing it with joy, it gave him great uneasiness. His eyes were now opened to a thousand little circumstances that confirmed it, and he wondered he had not observed them before. His heart was entirely in the possession of Rachel Seymour, which was a sufficient reason for his discouraging all hopes of any other. But had this not been the case, yet he could never have admitted himself to think of Miss Walton in the same manner; because her indiscretions, although they excited his pity and compassion, were effectual bars, in his mind, against his indulging a tender passion for her.

Very

Very much vexed with this discovery, he did not know well how to conduct himself. At last, he thought the best way of curing her of her attachment to him, would be to absent himself from her company: he, therefore, did not call upon her as he had done before, but sent frequently to inquire after her, with the excuse that business hindered him from calling in person.

He had not occasion to pursue this conduct long; for Miss Walton was taken so bad in a few days, that the physician had no hopes of her lingering out two days. She thought as much herself; and wishing to have one more interview with Nelson, she sent him

word, that she wished to see him instantly upon important business.

Nelson waited upon her ; but at the same time he was apprehensive that the important business was nothing more than her design of informing him of what he already knew ; and in that case it would put him to the necessity of discovering his prior attachment to Rachel Seymour, or of deceiving her with hopes which he meant not to fulfil. He could not resolve upon either : for he feared the first might be of fatal consequences ; and for the last, he had always a strong aversion to all manner of deceit.

The sight of the miserable object told him there was occasion for his
adopting

adopting either of these schemes; for a fortnight had so miserably changed her, that he would not have known her for the same person. He was so shocked, that he could not restrain his tears; and if Rachel had not stood in the way, he would have almost submitted to the hard condition, of offering her his hand, if it could have saved her life.

She saw his emotions, and thanked him in a weak voice for all his former services and present sympathy; prayed Heaven to reward him with happiness in this life, and felicity in the next.

She then ordered Martha to bring her a packet of sealed papers. This she delivered into Nelson's

D 6

hands,

hands, with orders to open it the day after her decease. Nelson took it, sobbing like a child, and totally unable to speak. She was affected with his concern for her, and at that instant was beginning to think Heaven cruel in making her lot so hard ; but presently recollecting herself, she recovered the utmost composure.

After remaining with her for more than an hour, Nelson was taking his leave, that he might leave her to repose : but she recalled him as he was going out of the room, telling him she had forgot one thing. Then taking a rich necklace from under her pillow, she put it into his hand, telling him to present it as a legacy to the person whom

whom Heaven should ordain for his wife. Then sighing deeply, she added, "May she be like thee
 "in every thing that is amiable!
 "May she be lovely! but above
 "all virtuous! for that is the first
 "ornament of the sex: without
 "that, all other perfections are of
 "but little value."

Nelson was opening his mouth on purpose to decline the present; but she insisted upon his keeping it, and then waved her hand for him to be gone; for her heart was so much affected, that she was unable to bid him adieu. Her eyes eagerly followed him to the door; and as soon as he disappeared, she uttered a groan, caused by her despair of never seeing him more. She

was

was right in her conjectures; for though he came back to inquire for her again in a few hours, she was before eased of all her pains and sorrows.

Nelson next day opened the packet which she had entrusted to him: he found it to be her will, in which he himself was declared to be sole heir of all her effects, after paying a legacy of two hundred pounds to Martha. This testimony of her esteem affected him in the most lively manner; and as he could not shew his gratitude in any other way, he had her interred in the most genteel manner; himself attending as chief mourner. When he had paid all the mournful duties which he owed the unfortunate

fortunate Miss Walton, he began to think again of the living; and, notwithstanding his grief for the former, yet he now felt a most enlivening joy at the thoughts of being soon in possession of his beloved Rachel.

He wrote the Quaker an account of Miss Walton's death, and the legacy she had left him, which amounted to something more than 3000*l*. concluding with a request to be recalled, that he might lay it all in the lap of his Rachel.

Before this letter reached Bristol, the Quaker and his daughter were on their way to London. That young lady was always happy when she heard of the welfare of her

Nelson;

Nelson; but, when she read his first letter, that gave an account of Miss Walton's story, she began to feel anxious fears for the constancy of her lover. She endeavoured to hide these from the eyes of her parents: but in spite of her endeavours they perceived a change; for her cheerfulness left her, and her health gave symptoms of being impaired. Anxious for the safety of his daughter, whom he loved with the most paternal affection, the Quaker judged it necessary to take a journey to London, prudently supposing that her affection for Nelson might be the cause of her alteration, and that the sight of him would restore her to her wonted cheerfulness.

cheerfulness. The pleasure which she discovered upon hearing his resolution, convinced him that he had not been wrong in his suppositions.

THE MEETING.

They set out for London on the same day that Nelson wrote them an account of the death of Miss Walton. Had they deferred it two days longer, it would have saved them the journey, and Rachel and Nelson a world of misery, of which it was productive.

Nelson received a letter on the same day that he wrote the above, from Mrs. Spruce, complaining of
his

his want of politeness, in not having called upon them according to promise, and mentioned a circumstance which he still thought upon with regret, in terms of freedom and levity, that convinced him she had lost a great deal of her former delicate scruples.

This unwelcome letter he somehow or other dropped, and young Seymour unfortunately picked it up. The contents of it gratified that gentleman; for he plainly perceived that Nelson was no Joseph more than himself.

Nelson was very uneasy when he missed this letter; but was much more so when Seymour shewed it to him: for he saw by his satirical grins, that he fully comprehended

comprehended Mrs. Spruce's hints. Nelson attempted to fabricate a story to deceive him; but he did it so awkwardly, that the other was more convinced of the truth of his conjectures, and rallied him for being an hypocrite, with an appearance of asperity.

Guilt makes mankind cowards, but doubly adds to their apprehensions, when, by its means, they are in danger of losing that which is dearest to them. Nelson was fully sensible of this, by his dread that the story of Mrs. Spruce would some way or other reach the ear of his mistress; the consequence of which would be an utter dismissal from her favour. His fears were the very means of his detection.

tion; for they made him insist upon Seymour's secrecy, who would not promise him that, till Nelson had informed him of the particulars of that imprudent transaction.

He rallied Nelson upon the ridiculous terrors he had of his cousin's displeasure; and endeavoured to make him believe, that, in place of doing him a discredit in her opinion, it would be the means of recommending him more to her favour. These arguments are too often true, with respect to failings of that nature, among the thoughtless and dissipated part of mankind; but Nelson knew Rachel too well, to be ignorant of her detestation of such glaring offences against virtue, as to make him
careless

careless about hiding it from her knowledge.

The unexpected arrival of her and her father, made the blood rush into his face, and for a minute hindered him from saluting her with the transports of a faithful lover, blessed with the unlooked-for sight of his beloved mistress. A few seconds, however, recovered him from his surprize; and then he welcomed her with the ardour of an enraptured swain, and was received by her with the most pleasing smiles of affability.

The Quaker, who saw with the most parental pleasure, happiness again restored to the breast of his daughter, resolved to oppose their union no longer than
till

till they returned into the country. Nelson was not long in soliciting him upon this subject; for he wished to get rid of the apprehensions his mind was still in with respect to the affair of Mrs. Spruce. He also took an opportunity of pressing her upon the subject; who gave him as favourable an answer as he could look for, by referring the matter entirely to her father's direction.

There never was a happier pair of lovers than Nelson and Rachel, when her father gave him assurances of his hearty permission to marry as soon as they returned to Bristol. Nelson made preparations for that event by selling out of the stocks, and lodged the
money

money in the hands of a banker, till he should have occasion to draw for it when he was entered into partnership with his intended father-in-law. These flattering prospects were of short duration: Envy and Malice soon darkened them by the poison of their infectious breaths.

A RIVAL.

Young Seymour, whose breast had not been warmed with a pure flame till he saw his cousin, was deeply smitten with her charms at first sight; and this passion was increased by the irresistible charms of her conversation, and the amiable

ble simplicity of her heart and manners. He discovered her to be possessed of every perfection which a luxuriant and delicate imagination could wish to find—lovely, sensible, and virtuous.

His conversation hitherto had not been much with females of this last character; but profligate as he was, his thoughts now did honour to virtue, by degrading those of a contrary character to an infinitely inferior degree of his admiration. The most profligate character is obliged to pay this tribute at the shrine of Virtue, when Vice is balanced with her in his imagination. Reason and reflection make us look upon the latter
with

with detestation, but on the former with the warmth of adoration.

The tender ties that subsisted between Nelson and Rachel, were very unfavourable symptoms against him; and he saw no hopes of being successful in his addresses, unless he could break these ties by making a discovery of Nelson's indiscretion. Honour did not oppose him in this treacherous design; for he never hearkened to her suggestions, when his own interest was materially concerned. His happiness, as well as his interest, was concerned in effecting a breach between the lovers; he, therefore, did not hesitate a moment in taking the selfish and treacherous resolution of ruining Nelson in the

esteem of his cousin, in order to advance his own interest.

This design he put in execution without delay; but did not go openly to work about it: for, at first, he only threw out some hints against Nelson, in a good-humoured way, and at a time when he was absent; occasionally lamenting, "that it was a great loss to him, to be possessed of so much good-nature, for it made him unable to resist the temptations of dissolute companions."

When he found that those hints alarmed Rachel for the constancy of her lover, and made her dread him to be an hypocritical rake—a character which she detested above all others—he would seem to vindicate

vindicate his character, by laying his faults to the account of his youth and inexperience; and expatiate upon the goodness of his heart—artfully illustrating that with the story of his attention to Miss Walton; and adding an anecdote that did more than any thing beside to cool Rachel's attachment: this was, by maliciously insinuating that Nelson had agreed to marry her, if death had not prevented his design.

A LOVER IN DISGRACE.

These malicious insinuations alarmed her to a very high degree; and for the first time she felt a

E 2 jealous

jealous resentment kindle in her breast against her injured lover. Her father was no less alarmed than she was; for he well knew that his daughter's happiness or misery depended upon the falsity or truth of these reports. He examined his nephew in private, who added to his uneasiness by the artful conduct that he pursued. Professing the greatest friendship for Nelson, he begged his uncle would decline catechising him upon the subject.

The Quaker was nonplussed what to do: he did not like to be taxed with having formed unjust suspicions; and he could not think of allowing his daughter to marry him, till he was satisfied that these reports

reports were groundless. This uncertainty kept him from discovering any coolness towards him ; so that Seymour began to fear that his schemes would be fruitless. This forced him to produce a direct proof against Nelson ; and this proof was the identical letter which Mrs. Spruce had written to him.

The success of his contrivance was complete ; for the Quaker declared he would sooner carry his daughter to the grave, than marry her to a disguised rake ; as he supposed Nelson must be, from his criminal connection with a married woman, the very day he left Bristol ; and while his oaths and promises to his daughter were

still fresh in his memory. He immediately went to his daughter's apartment; and after convincing her of Nelson's guilt, by shewing her the fatal letter, he commanded her, on pain of his displeasure, to give up all connexion with him. Rachel promised dutiful obedience; but the authoritative tone of her father, joined to the cruel effect which the reading of the letter had upon her, so much discomposed her spirits, that she fainted away, and before night was put to bed in a high delirium.

Nelson, who had been unhappy for two days before, by discovering a coolness in her behaviour towards him, was now partly informed of the cause from his own suspicions.

suspicious. Unable to bear the torments of his apprehensions any longer, he hastened to her father, on purpose to acquaint him with the extent of his guilt, and to rely upon his and his daughter's forgiveness by his future behaviour.

He found the Quaker sitting alone, and just returned from the room of his daughter, who was yet in a delirium. Nelson approached with the face of a condemned criminal, and was received with a look of serious anger. The Quaker heard him, without interruption, give the detail of the circumstances that led to his crime, which he did without concealment or palliation.

“And does thy conscience charge thee with no more?” said the Quaker, with a penetrating look.

Nelson answered solemnly, “it did not. But, alas!” continued he, “I fear that this of itself is too much: for if it loses me your friendship, and makes Rachel look upon me with aversion, it will make me miserable beyond description.”

“I am sorry for thee, young man,” returned the other; “but I cannot promise thee that friendship which I formerly had for thee.—And as for my daughter Rachel, do not flatter thyself with hopes of her hand; for she
“shall

"shall never be thine.—Thy
 "wickedness, alas! has endangered
 "her life, and may be the means
 "of making me hate thee for ever.
 "Farewell! May the Almighty give
 "thee true contrition for thy sins,
 "and a holy amendment of thy
 "future life and walk!"

Here the Quaker went out of
 the room; while a tear of pity for
 Nelson, and the danger of his
 beloved daughter, stole silently
 down his aged cheek.

Nelson was almost frantic with
 despair when he heard the Quaker's
 solemn avowal, "that Rachel
 "should never be his." He dared
 not to insist upon recalling that
 sentence; for he knew the Quaker
 too well, to hope that he could be

swayed from his resolutions, when once they were finally taken; and the solemnity with which it was delivered put that beyond a doubt. He went up to his own apartment, and there gave loose to his despair, in thoughts and reflections that were excruciating beyond conception. He had no one to blame but himself; his anger was, therefore, wholly directed against his own folly.—Even he who had so treacherously forfeited his promise to him, did not incur the severity of his censures; for he considered that it was a duty which Seymour owed to one so amiable, and so nearly related to him.

THE JOURNEY.

When he ventured into the company of the Seymours, he saw himself viewed in so different a light from what he had been a few days ago, that he found it painful to sit among them. The uncle of Rachel was the only one that took notice of him. The Quaker never spoke with, nor directed his eyes towards him; and young Seymour had not the assurance to hold a conversation with one whom he had so treacherously injured. This made Nelson shy of appearing among them, and even wish for an excuse to remove from a place

where he was looked upon with such mortifying coldness.

Rachel's uncle was sensible of the disagreeable situation he was in; and proposed to him to take a tour to the North of England, where his business required the attendance of some one at that time. His son was at first designed for this excursion; but finding he had a reluctance to go, he solicited Nelson to do it, hoping it would be a relief to him in his awkward situation.

Nelson threw out several objections against the journey; but the distance of the place was the most material one; for he was afraid of losing any favourable opportunity
that

that might occur, to reinstate himself again in the good opinion of the Quaker and his daughter; who, also, might return to Bristol during his absence. Rachel's indisposition would have been a more powerful objection than any one; but, happily, by this time she was declared to be in a fair way of recovery.

Mr. Seymour, however, overcame his objections, by promising to give him immediate intelligence of any thing that might happen, that was favourable or prejudicial to his passion. With these assurances Nelson consented to go; and accordingly set off next morning, after having made a fruitless attempt to bring her father to give him

him some hopes of a relaxation of his severe resolution against him. He also left a letter for Rachel; recapitulating the circumstances of his guilt; as he had before informed her father, with assurances of his future constancy, and the most ardent solicitations for pardon and reinstatement in her esteem; ending with solemn asseverations, "that, notwithstanding the indiscretions he had been guilty of, his heart had ever felt for her, and for no one else, the most ardent affection and rapturous esteem."

A DECEITFUL FRIEND.

This letter never reached the hands of Rachel; for he had yet so much confidence left in the honour of her cousin, that he intrusted it to his care to deliver to her; little dreaming that that gentleman was his worst enemy and secret rival. Young Seymour took the liberty to peruse this letter himself; and apprehending that it might be favourable for Nelson, and injurious for himself, very prudently offered it to her in such a manner (telling her from whence it came) as to be certain of her refusing it; which furnished him with a very proper excuse, upon
returning

returning it to Nelson at his return.

As soon as Nelson set out on his journey, his treacherous rival began to be indefatigable in his endeavours to gain the esteem of Rachel: all his arts, however, could not bring her to consider him in such a favourable light as Nelson. He was more successful in insinuating himself into her father's good graces; for that gentleman lent a favourable ear to his proposals; and thought that, by marrying his daughter to him, he would effectually secure her from the danger of falling into the hands of Nelson, whose principles he looked upon in a most unfavourable light, compared with those of his nephew.

nephew. He therefore seconded his addresses very warmly; and, when Rachel gave her cousin a flat denial, remonstrated with her so sharply, as to make her burst into tears. The sight of these immediately softened him, and made him solicit her with his accustomed tenderness, to hearken to the proposals of her cousin.

She could not withstand him when he adopted these parental and tender persuasions, but submitted entirely to his disposal; although she saw misery staring her in the face, if married to her cousin, whom she esteemed in no other manner than as a relation; nay, her heart was inwardly prejudiced against him, for having been

been the means of depriving her of happiness, by his discoveries of Nelson's faults.—She suffered many a burst of grief, and heaved many heart-rending sighs, before she was brought to give up that highly offending, but still loved youth. She wished to see, and hear him endeavour to justify himself; for her heart fondly hoped that he would be so far able to palliate his offences, as to allow her to receive him again into confidence. Had she been allowed that opportunity, he would have cleared himself from every crime that was laid against him. Excepting that which related to Mrs. S. his love, I may say adoration, of her would have pleaded his pardon for

for that one ; for never man loved more ardently than he did, or woman was ever more loth to part with a lover than she was with him.

Her new lover pursued his advantages so rapidly, that the day of their union was named to be in two weeks. No bride ever wished less for her nuptial day than Rachel, or dreaded it with more terror ; it was to her, like the approach of the fatal day to a condemned and despairing criminal, who is ready to expire with terror before it is near.

Her uncle was faithful to the promise which he made to Nelson, when he prevailed upon him to go upon his business. As soon as
his

his son's intentions were known, and her father's approbation of them was obtained, he wrote an account thereof to Nelson, although it was contrary to his son's interest. And when the day of their union was appointed, he wrote a second letter, in case the first should have miscarried; for he wished to discharge himself of his promise with honour.

Unfortunately, he had not the precaution to put these into the post-office himself—for which reason they never went; for his son's curiosity made him examine every letter that was directed to Nelson, whether upon business or not; and finding these would not be to his advantage,

advantage, he found means to stop them from going to the place they were intended.

A FAITHFUL FRIEND.

A week before the dreaded day arrived, of which Nelson was still ignorant, Syntax arrived in London along with Dr. F——. That honest fellow was soon informed of the misfortunes of his friend; and justly suspecting that he was ignorant of her being to be so soon married to Seymour, he procured a direction, and sat down to write him a letter: but before he had well begun it, his imagination suggested that it might miscarry,

miscarry, or not reach him in time. Hereupon, tearing the letter, he took a resolution worthy of his friendship : this was, to be bearer of the news himself.

After obtaining a week's liberty from his master, he went and hired a post-chaise, in which he travelled night and day till he arrived at York. Nelson was surpris'd at seeing him, but was almost drove to madness by the killing news he brought. He raged, stamp'd, and execrated the deceitful Seymours ; for he believed the father as treacherous as his son, because he had not received the intelligence which he had engaged to send in case of necessity. Rachel herself did not escape in the first transports of his
rage ;

rage; for he dared to rank her among the common class of faithless and inconstant women—and even debated in his own mind, whether she was worthy of any more trouble.

He would have sat down contented with this thought, if his resentment had not spurred him on to London—on purpose to upbraid her for her sudden acceptance of another lover, and to call him to account for his treacherous conduct; for he was now fully persuaded, that interest had caused that gentleman to represent him in an unfavourable and criminal light, that he himself might stand the better chance of succeeding.

With

With these resentments glowing in his breast, he left his business unfinished, and came express to London, accompanied by his friend Syntax, who was almost worn out with fatigue and want of rest.

The expedition with which they travelled, added to want of food, and the hurry and confusion of his spirits, had nearly unsettled Nelson's reason before he arrived.— When they got to London, he ordered the driver to carry him to Mr. Seymour's ; into whose house he rushed, with a flutter on his spirits that almost deprived him of breath ; but which was greatly augmented by seeing a number of
servants

servants busily employed in making preparations for the following day. He abruptly entered the parlour; where he beheld the bride and bridegroom sitting close together, surrounded with their friends. This sight agitated him so much with various passions, that it totally overpowered his fatigued and tumultuous spirits; and he fell lifeless on the floor, before he could utter a word.

Every one was filled with astonishment at his unexpected appearance, and the suddenness of his fall. Rachel lay lifeless in the arms of the bridegroom, and the whole room was filled with confusion and terror.—Every one vented expressions of censure, some of indigna-

tion, against the lifeless Nelson. These censures provoked his faithful attendant Syntax so much, that he took him, lifeless as he was, in his arms; and, casting a frowning look upon all present, carried him in that condition to the chaise from whence they had alighted, and ordered the driver to go to an adjoining tavern.

When Nelson came to himself, he had but a very imperfect recollection of the circumstance that had happened; and asked Syntax, how they came to the place they were now in?

Syntax's resentment still burned within him, at the supposed scorn and ill-nature of the Quakers; and caused him to exaggerate in his account,

count, by making Nelson believe, that not only Mr. Seymour and his brother, but even his Rachel also, had used bitter and scornful speeches against him.

THE LAST EXTREME.

This ingrateful idea tore his heart with the most piercing anguish.—To be spurned at by her, who was dearer to him than life, happiness, and every thing besides, was a thought that made even death desirable. From that minute he took the fatal resolution to put an end to his existence. This resolution he determined to put in exe-

cution before she was the wife of his rival; and, by making her his heir, leave her a proof that would in the strongest degree convince her of the ardency and constancy of his passion; and therefore fill her breast with remorse, if she had the least spark of her former attachment to him remaining.

As soon, therefore, as he perceived that the watchful faculties of Syntax were overpowered with fatigue and sleep, he sat down and wrote his will; in which he made over all his fortune to Rachel, excepting two hundred pounds, which he devised to Syntax, as a memorial of his friendship.

When he had finished this, he wrote her a few lines, as his last adieu,

adieu, in a stile that was expressive of the situation of his mind, which was strongly agitated with love and resentment.

“ Most cruel of Women,

“ I NO longer plead for forgiveness of a crime, which the
“ bitterness of my repentance
“ might have washed from your
“ memory long ago. My present,
“ and the last you will receive, is
“ to charge you with cruelty to
“ him who would sacrifice his life
“ a thousand times for your welfare.
“ fare.

“ Your sudden consent to receive the addresses of a treacherous rival, tells me I never was

F 3

“ possessed

" possessed of your esteem.—If
 " you had rejected all offers of
 " that nature for one year, after
 " discarding me, I should not have
 " complained, but rather have
 " applauded the justice of your
 " severity, and the delicacy of
 " your conduct.—But your accept-
 " ance of one, whose crimes of the
 " same nature outstripped mine ten-
 " fold, convinces me that I am
 " very low in your esteem indeed!
 " a situation that one who loves as
 " I do, could never live under.

" The most ardent love might
 " admit of resentment in such a
 " case.—Accept of the inclosed,
 " as a proof that Nelson loved thee
 " to the last ; but forget there was
 " ever

"ever such a wretch.—Death only
 "can tear your image from his
 "heart."

He inclosed this, and the memorandum for the disposal of his effects, in a piece of paper, which he directed to Rachel, and slipped them into Syntax's pocket, who was still asleep.

The fatigue, and want of rest for two days before, had raised a kind of fever upon him; which was greatly augmented by the agitation of his mind. He was apprehensive of it settling upon his brain; in which case, it might deprive him of the power of putting his fatal resolutions in practice. He, at first, intended to have delayed the

F 4 execution

execution of it, till he saw Rachel accompanying his rival to the altar; but the fear of approaching insanity, urged him to do it immediately. He therefore loaded his pistols, put them in his pocket, and was silently approaching the door; but the fidelity of Syntax shot across his distracted mind, and made him turn round to give a last look.—The tears fell from his eyes, upon recollecting his fidelity; and he uttered a fervent ejaculation for his happiness, and the felicity of his much-beloved Rachel Seymour. His mind at that instant told him that he was going to take the most effectual method to destroy her felicity; and at the same time, the awful thoughts
of

of an avenging God, made him tremble with a dread of future punishment for his daring design; and he involuntarily fell upon his knees to ask forgiveness.—But the cruelty of Rachel again presenting itself to his agitated mind, strongly urged him to the rash deed. He was going away a second time; but the Almighty stopped him again at the threshold of the door, by whispering, as it were, in his ear, “Rash man! forbear thy daring purpose; or meet the vengeance of thy offended Maker.” He started back with horror, as if the voice of Heaven had actually whispered these words in his ears. Still was he bent upon his design; but the awful voice of conscience would

not keep silence; so that the struggles between that and offended love drove him to desperation.—Twenty times did he rush towards the door; and as often did this awful monitor arrest him at the threshold; till Reason at last being entirely driven from her seat, he lost all idea of every thing around him, and, going out of the tavern, wandered in the streets, till a person, discovering his insane situation, very humanely carried him to St. Luke's Hospital, till his friends should be advised of his unhappy condition.

When Syntax awoke, and found that Nelson had left him, he imagined that he had gone away to the Quaker's. He waited for his
return

return till one o'clock in the morning; and then began to be very uneasy, for he did not think he would remain so late at the Quaker's. He, however, waited till three o'clock; when no Nelson making his appearance, he went to bed, and slept soundly till seven o'clock.

As soon as he got himself dressed, he went to the Quaker's, expecting to see or hear of him; but was told he had not been there since he had carried him away the evening before. Till that moment Syntax had no dread of his forming any fatal design; but then recollecting Nelson's rashness on a former occasion, it instantly struck his mind, that he had

F 6 drowned

drowned or shot himself. He ran back to the tavern, to see if he had taken his pistols : they were not to be seen ; but, to confirm his fears, he beheld some gun-powder, &c. lying upon the table ; which Nelson had scattered when he loaded them.

Syntax was now almost assured that his young friend was no more, and fell a-tearing of his hair with signs of the greatest despair and grief.

While he was deploring the miserable fate of his unhappy friend, the master of the tavern, who had been made acquainted with the cause of his sorrow, accidentally casting his eyes over a morning paper, saw the name of Nelson in

an

an advertisement dated from St. Luke's Hospital. He concluded this to be the person that Syntax was making so many bitter lamentations for, and therefore carried him the news-paper, and pointed to the advertisement.

Melancholy as the description represented Nelson's situation to be, yet Syntax was overjoyed upon reading it, because it assured him that he was still alive. He was going to post away instantly to the place directed to; but recollecting Nelson's packet, which he had found in his pocket a few minutes before, he inclosed that and the advertisement in a piece of paper, which he sealed and directed, and then

then carried them to Rachel Seymour.

A MISERABLE BRIDE.

That amiable girl was in a truly pitiable situation at that moment. Ever since the day that she had been prevailed upon to receive the addresses of her cousin, she had not experienced a moment's happiness. She bitterly repented of this step, because it had put a bar in the way of her future happiness, by depriving her of the hopes of ever being connected with Nelson ; the only one for whom her heart had ever felt a partiality, and with whom

whom she now found it was impossible for it to part.

Thus was she circumstanced, when he made his sudden appearance before her the night before; which had so great an effect, as to occasion her to faint away. That short glimpse of him recalled all her tendernefs, and filled her with the most dismal despair at the prospect of next morning; which was to seal her vows to one whom she could never love.

She did not close her eyes the whole night; for her imagination continually presented Nelson before them, worn out with grief, and dying in despair; and she saw nothing but the most dismal prospect
for

for herself in that state which was to commence next day.

The morning only served to increase her misery—although it was ushered in by the glee and merriment of some youthful acquaintances, who were as happy as if it had been the day that was to give them to the youths of their hearts. Rachel was the only one that felt no pleasing sensation: she looked melancholy and dejected; which they imputed to her flutterings upon the occasion, being unacquainted with the anguish that was preying upon her heart.

While they were all busy in ornamenting her for the approaching ceremony, she was comparing herself

self to a lamb that is decking out to be made a sacrifice of; and she could not help wishing, that, like it, she might never return from the altar with life.

At that instant Syntax abruptly entered the room. His eyes were dim with tears, and his woeful countenance was expressive of some melancholy disaster. He hastily presented her with the packet, and retired without uttering a word. She observed his appearance, and her heart was agitated with the most alarming fears. She sunk down upon a chair, almost deprived of life: she had just as much left, as to enable her to break the seal. The advertisement immediately struck her eye: she glanced over it.

it, gave a shriek, and fainted away.

Her father, who was a witness of this transaction, took up the packet which had dropped from her hand; and, as soon as he saw her restored to life, retired to another room to examine its contents.

A secret affection which he still felt for the unfortunate youth, made him sigh at reading the account of his condition; but he could not restrain his tears when he read his affecting letter, and saw Rachel declared the heiress of his fortune in the paper which he had inclosed. These convinced him of Nelson's attachment to her in the most forcible manner, and made him

him feel the utmost regret because his failings had rendered it necessary for him to oppose their union. Had it not been for these, our youth would have been the first object of his choice.

There was one passage in Nelson's letter that alarmed him. This was, the insinuation respecting Seymour; and till that was cleared up to his satisfaction, he thought it absolutely necessary to comply with his daughter's solicitation to have her marriage delayed.

He did not acquaint her with his doubts respecting his nephew, however; for he still wished her to consider him as the object of his election: but he shewed Nelson's

son's letter to his brother—who was as anxious as himself to have these hints respecting his son cleared up; for he had never till then heard any thing of that nature laid to his charge. All these delays foreboded but little good to the disappointed bridegroom; for, as guilt is always suspicious, so he began to dread, that every little circumstance might lead to his detection, and expose him to the scorn and contempt of his mistress and his friends.

This obliged him to set his brain to work, to contrive means to make her father alter his mind a second time, and hasten the marriage. By means of his mother, who blindly assented to whatever he

he did, he found out the reasons that had been the cause of the marriage being delayed; and as he well knew that Nelson could give sufficient proofs against him, he resolved to venture still farther in his treacherous conduct towards that unfortunate youth, by making his uncle and father imagine, that Nelson's insanity was merely an artifice to work upon their compassion—and the insinuations against himself, thrown out on purpose to make them delay her marriage till he got an opportunity of carrying her off.

A man that could condescend to think of such perfidy, could not be long in contriving measures to ensure himself success. Her father

WAS

was very credulous: he was therefore very apt to receive prejudices against any one, and as open to conviction. His nephew, being perfectly acquainted with his blind side, did not find much difficulty in raising his suspicions against Nelson, by throwing out the insinuations as above. His chief difficulties were, to prevent him from coming at the truth—which he could easily do by going to St. Luke's Hospital—and get him again prevailed upon to appoint an early day for their marriage.

A few guineas overcame the first of these difficulties: for though a golden key can open every lock, yet it can shut them also. Seymour, by means of that, prevailed on the
keepers

keepers to deny the sight of Nelson to every one but himself and Syntax; telling them, his reason for it was to keep some of Nelson's friends from wresting an estate from him. Thus did this treacherous wretch endeavour to hurt the unhappy youth in the most material affair, under the mask of pretended friendship.

As Seymour expected, his uncle expressed a wish to visit Nelson, to resolve his doubts and detect his pretended madness; and requested him to accompany him upon this occasion. Seymour, however, excused himself from going with his uncle; because Nelson might take an opportunity of doing him an injury, whether he was mad or not,
out

out of spite for having laid open his conduct to him and his daughter. His uncle was satisfied with his reasons, and therefore got his brother to accompany him to St. Luke's; where, as Seymour expected, they were denied access, and every kind of information respecting Nelson. This corroborated the story which Seymour had fabricated, and made the Quaker afraid that Nelson might really take an opportunity to carry Rachel off; he therefore returned to his brother's house, fully persuaded of the truth of all that his nephew had told him, and determined to carry her to the country immediately.

Rachel

Rachel was very well pleased when she heard of her father's intention, for she had met with enough in London to make her hate it effectually; but Seymour felt the utmost chagrin, because it convinced him that his uncle had still some prejudices remaining against him. He did not give up his pursuit, however; for he really loved Rachel with as much ardour as a man of his principles is capable of; and he was still afraid of her falling into the hands of his rival: he, therefore, made another attempt upon her father, who thereupon shewed him Nelson's letter; and frankly told him the suspicions which it had occasioned, and, joined to his daughter's intreaties, had

caused him to alter his mind ; assuring him, if he could overcome these, he should have his consent to marry her when he pleased.

In answer to this, Seymour could only advance the general good character which he obtained among his friends, and which none but Nelson had ever attempted to impeach ; taxing his uncle with credulity, in giving ear to the assertions of a rival, whose interest it was to make him appear in as bad a light as possible.

What Seymour said appeared to have a great deal of influence upon his uncle ; he therefore pursued his subject, by exciting his fears that Nelson could as easily carry off his daughter at Bristol as in London ;

London ; and at last wrought so powerfully upon the Quaker's credulity and fears, that all his suspicions against him vanished, and he began to think, that the only way to secure her from falling into the hands of Nelson, and prevent her from ruin, would be, to marry her to his nephew without delay.

For this purpose, Rachel was immediately summoned to attend him in a private conference—in which he informed her of Nelson's treacherous designs—railing at the same time against that poor youth with the utmost asperity ; and ended his speech, by desiring her to appoint another day for her union with her cousin.

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This

This was an unexpected demand upon the poor Rachel; for she had totally given up all thoughts of being any more plagued upon the subject, and had been comforting herself with the hopes of forgetting the false Nelson also, who had still a much greater share of her thoughts than Seymour.—She made use of every argument that a still greater aversion than she had before for Seymour furnished her with, and that a dutiful child could use. But neither her arguments, nor even her tears, which on any other occasion would have been irresistible, could sway her credulous parent from his purpose; and he, who had never denied

nied her a request, or made her duty a hardship by imposing upon it rigorous tasks, only lessened the severity of his commands by allowing her the choice of the town or country to have the ceremony performed in.

This severe injunction did not make Rachel swerve from what she thought her duty. Her nice sense of that overcame every opposition, when she found her father's command could not be conquered by reason or argument; and though Love is strong, Death and Hatred are stronger than the Grave: yet this amiable girl discovered, that her obedience and duty to her parent were superior to all of them; for it made her fa-

crifice every hope and aversion, and face a state that presented nothing but hopeless misery to her view.—Twenty times did she open her mouth to pronounce her acquiescence to her father's pleasure; but the words as often died away upon her tongue, before they could reach her lips,

Her father perceiyed her situation, and that a straw would turn the balance entirely in his favour: he therefore made use of an argument to effect this, which would have been successful, had her objections been still unconquered.

"My daughter Rachel," said he, assuming a look of severity which he did not feel, "never denied
"the wishes of her father before.

"Thy

"Thy obedience almost antici-
 "pated his desires, and made him
 "happy to think that he asked thee
 "to do nothing unreasonable.
 "But now——"

"O hold," cried she, bursting
 into tears, "and do not charge me
 "with want of affection, or remiss-
 "ness in my duty. If my father
 "requires my compliance—if it
 "is his earnest wish—I am ready,
 "I am willing to obey him."

She could say no more; for her
 tears flowed with redoubled quick-
 ness; the despair and agitation of
 her heart almost choked her with
 its throbbing, and deprived her of
 the power of speech.

"Thou art still the child of my
 "affections, and the best of daugh-
 "ters,"

"ters," said her father, clasping
 her fervently to his breast, and
 kissing her forehead; "it is thy
 "happiness which I consult: there-
 "fore think me not cruel or pre-
 "cipitate, if I appoint to-morrow
 "as the beginning of your happi-
 "ness, and the end of a parent's
 "anxious fears."

"Allow me to speak," said she,
 clasping his hand with great emo-
 tion; "I have but one favour to
 "ask, and do not deny me——
 "Only delay it till my mother
 "can be a witness of my obedi-
 "ence. Her presence will sup-
 "port me greatly on the occasion.
 "Without her, I fear, I fear I
 "could not have courage or re-
 "solution to go through it."

This

This reasonable request was immediately granted; and for that purpose it was determined to set off for Bristol next morning.— This was Seymour's own motion; for he had several reasons for wishing it, which he did not inform them of.

Every thing being thus settled upon to the wishes of the bridegroom, his spirits were raised to an uncommon pitch of vanity; and that made him look so happy, and talk so agreeably, as would have charmed any woman excepting his bride; who only assumed an appearance of it, while the bitterest despair was gnawing upon her heart.

THE HAPPY DISCOVERY.

At that instant the bridegroom's father entered the room, and was met by his son, who exultingly informed him of the resolution they had taken, and Rachel's compliance to crown his happiness by giving him her hand as soon as they arrived at Bristol.

"Not so fast, young man!" said his father, knitting his brows, and examining him with a penetrating look—"Rachel shall not be thine, till thou hast justified thy conduct to another, from a charge that makes thee a disgrace to all who are connected with thee.—Knowest thou this handwriting?" holding out a letter.

The

The other took the letter, trembling with apprehension: but no sooner had he opened it, than he turned pale as death, and was ready to sink upon the floor through shame and vexation. Upon discovering it to be his own, and one that he had assured himself he had destroyed with his own hands long ago, guilt and shame were so strongly painted on his countenance, that his father needed not his own confession to convince him of his crime.

“I dare not deny this letter to
 “be mine,” said the guilty wretch;
 “but will my father ruin my fu-
 “ture happiness for one miscon-
 “duct, in which I must acknow-
 “ledge I was highly to blame, but

"for which I have severely repented ever since?"

"Repentance," said his father, sternly, "is no atonement for a crime of this nature: but seek not to lessen thy guilt by insignificant excuses; the evidence of it is too glaring to be disguised by invented palliations. Thou acknowledgest the letter to be thine; and she that received it expects thee to fulfil thy promise—and I am ready to give thee my consent."

"Can my father wish my ruin, by obliging me to marry one whose character is infamous?"

"Add not falsehood and scandal to thy treachery," said the Quaker; "for she is more virtuous

"ous than thee. Did she not with-
 "stand thy infamous arts, oaths,
 "and promises? or submit to thy
 "desires, till thou hadst given her
 "security for making her thy
 "spouse? She was imprudent,
 "but she is not infamous; for her
 "heart has been constant to thee,
 "and made her refuse the hand of
 "one that is thy equal—in honour,
 "thy superior."

Seymour, not being able to de-
 ny the charge that was brought
 against him, endeavoured to pre-
 vail upon his father, by the most
 pressing entreaties, not to insist
 upon his fulfilling the promise in
 the letter, as it must make him for
 ever miserable, because there could
 be nothing but perpetual strife be-
 tween

tween them ; declaring at the same time, that his heart could never love any woman but his cousin.

“ And thinkest thou, foolish boy !” answered the other, “ that Rachel will take thee, after knowing thy unworthiness, and treachery to another ? or that my brother Jonas would not sooner wed her to one of the scum of the earth, than to thee ? — What sayest thou, Rachel ? Canst thou give him thy love, after knowing that his is the right of another—one that is worthy of his utmost care ?”

“ Heaven forbid that I should ever be so infatuated !” said she, “ or that my cousin should require me to do such a thing !”

This

This she delivered with an emphasis, and accompanied with a look of resentment, which at once demolished every remaining hope of his ever possessing her. Her father also recalled the promise he had given him, and joined his brother; who absolutely insisted upon his son's fulfilling the engagement with the person to whom he had given the promise, and who was the daughter of a creditable Quaker, and, excepting in this instance, had maintained the character of a dutiful child, and an amiable and virtuous young woman.

The manner in which Mr. Seymour discovered the above circumstance, was this:—He had accidentally

cidentally called upon the father of the young woman; and in the course of conversation he let drop some hints respecting his son's marriage with Rachel; which the young woman no sooner heard than she fell a-weeping. This surprised them, and made her father question her so strictly, that she gave them an account of the whole affair, and delivered the letter into the hand of her father, who gave it Mr. Seymour to shew to his son.

Young Seymour, about two months before, having privately discovered that she had a partiality for him, ungenerously endeavoured to take advantage of it, by making an attempt upon her virtue.

tue. But in this he was disappointed; for she was not so much in love as to surrender that to his honour, till he had given her a security for making her his wife.

His passion being more inflamed by the opposition he met with, made him so far forget his usual circumspection, that he wrote her the aforesaid promise; telling her at the same time, that were it not for the displeasure of his father, he would marry her without delay.

After receiving this security, she, very imprudently, was prevailed upon to allow him such liberties as to open a way to the gratification of his wishes; which he had no sooner accomplished, than he began to contrive measures

to regain possession of the promise which he had given her.

For some time, he pretended to have the greatest fondness for her, and tried every means to wind himself into her confidence, so as to depend upon his honour. When he thought he had gained this point, he slyly insinuated that the promise he had given her was not his own writing; and ingenuously confessed, that when he gave it to her he meant to deceive her: but she had now gained such an entire possession of his heart, that he would exchange it by giving her another, which her own eyes should be a witness of his writing.

She had very near been taken in by this artifice; but happily a doubt

doubt almost instantly struck her mind, that he now meant to deceive her. This made her think of a scheme to counterplot him, if he meant any thing of that nature. Pretending she could not come at his letter at that time, she put him off till next day ; and in the mean time she copied it so nicely, that a close examination only could discover the forgery.

When he called next day, she delivered him the copy without any signs of suspicion ; but seeing him about to read it, she all of a sudden pretended to be suspicious of his intentions, and struggled to take it from him ; but he eagerly tore it into a hundred pieces, and threw it into the fire ; crying out,
“ Thus

“ Thus perish the witness of my
 “ deceitful intentions.”

When this was accomplished, he inwardly prided himself on his dexterity ; and, by one evasion or another, protracted the writing of another letter till they were interrupted.

Not suspecting that he was on the point of being married to another, the young lady did not press him for another letter ; especially as she was convinced that the letter she had in her possession was his own hand-writing. In his future visits, he used various pretences to make her believe that the security would be unnecessary ; and assured her, that in a few weeks he would give her the best security by offering

ing his hand in marriage;—the only security that a woman should accept of.

To convince the reader of the sincerity of his intentions to fulfil these promises,—it is only necessary to mention, that they were made the same week in which he was to have been married to his cousin; and on the same account he prevailed upon his father to keep his intended marriage as secret as possible.

THE DANGER OF MISREPRESENTATION.

During the time that these transactions were going on among the
Quakers,

Quakers, Nelson was either tasting the bitters of an unpromising repentance, or roving through the fancies of an unsettled mind.

As soon as Syntax had delivered the packet to Rachel, he posted away to St. Luke's Hospital; where he had the pleasure of seeing Nelson alive, but miserably disordered in his intellects. He did not take the least notice of this faithful attendant, who sat down by him, sobbing and blubbering like a child.

Let not the reader scornfully smile at the woman-like weakness of this honest fellow; who, although he could not help crying at the sight of his friend, could bear his own misfortunes with philosophic indifference.

indifference.—Nature had not endowed him with solidity of judgment, or strength of mind; but he possessed a proportionably larger share of the social virtues: he was a faithful servant, a zealous friend, and a sympathizing companion.

For almost a week he constantly attended upon Nelson; one moment crying through despair of his ever recovering his senses, and the next transported with joy, upon seeing the most distant ray of returning reason.

On the sixth day his brain was almost turned, by seeing Nelson give proofs of restored reason; for he knew Syntax, shook him affectionately by the hand, and talked rationally upon the situation from which

which he had just elapsed; considering it as the merciful interposition of Heaven, to hinder him from committing the daring resolution that he had determined upon in the hurricane of his thoughts.

Rachel was the first object that again occupied his thoughts; but, alas! they were filled with a melancholy despondency; for he assured himself that he had now lost her for ever by her marriage with Seymour;—and his reflections told him that he had lost her merely by his own misconduct.

He, nevertheless, thought she had not altogether behaved to him as she ought to have done. She might have given him an opportunity of laying open his own conduct,

duct, and heard what he had to say for himself, before she dismissed him for ever upon the report of his rival. He even wished to hear that she scornfully despised him; for it would give him a melancholy pleasure, and might furnish him with the means of extricating his heart from its hopeless attachment.

The prejudices of Syntax fed these melancholy ideas; for he scrupled not to censure Rachel for cruelty and caprice, in very severe terms; and bitterly exclaimed against her father and uncle, for their unfriendly conduct, in not having once called to inquire after him; for Syntax was ignorant of the orders that Seymour had given to the keepers.

These misrepresentations were not entirely the effects of Syntax's resentment, for in that case he would have been guilty of injustice; but he conceived that by representing things in the worst light, he would work upon Nelson's resentment, which he thought would be the surest way to cure him of his passion for her, and allow his mind to return to its former temperament and composure.

Love drives its votaries either upon one extreme or another. The smiles of the beloved object infatuate to adoration and hide a thousand imperfections; but scorn and disdain, on the other hand, drive away the mist entirely from our eyes, and the flattering idea

we

we had formed, is changed into an object of deformity, clothed with numberless faults and follies.

The account of Syntax had a similar effect to the last upon the mind of Nelson, who began to form cruel and unjust thoughts of the amiable Rachel; whose mind was employed in melancholy reflections on his situation, or fervent wishes for his welfare. He even wished for an occasion of shewing her a mark of disrespect, to shew her that he now thought her unworthy of the esteem he formerly had for her. He was not long in finding the means of doing this effectually. Her miniature still hung upon his breast: she had given it him as the pledge of

H 2

her

her love, when he parted with her at Bristol; and though it was not set in diamonds, yet Nelson once valued it more than the richest gem that nature or the hand of art could frame.

He untied it from his neck; and, after almost gazing his soul away, took a resolution which almost tore his heart-strings asunder, notwithstanding the resentment he felt against her: this was, to return it to her again; which he immediately put in practice; and, along with it, sent the following card:

“Madam,

“RECEIVE back a pledge,
“which now puts me in mind how
“much I was deceived in believ-

“ing

"ing myself to have been once
 "esteemed by its original.—When
 "that image was engraven upon
 "my heart, I thought it was im-
 "possible to eradicate or deface
 "it; I fondly believed thee supe-
 "rior to thy sex.—I am at last
 "undeceived: scorn and disdain
 "have effectually defaced the par-
 "tial image which the infatuation
 "of my imagination had formed
 "of thee, and discovered thee to
 "have the failings of thy sex."

How differently were the
 thoughts of Rachel employed at
 the time of his writing these peevish
 and ill-natured lines! Ever since
 she had received the advertisement,
 which informed her of his miser-

able situation, her heart had felt the utmost regret for her severity towards him. Every remembrance of his faults was blotted out from her memory; and she fervently wished for the restoration of his senses, that she might convince him of her unabated affection, and once more restore him to confidence and favour. But how bitter were her prospects, when her mind suggested that he would never again be capable of knowing the esteem she still had for him! Her days were passed in grief, which, though silent, was preying upon the springs of life; and nightly was her couch watered with her tears.

After

After the discovery of Seymour's perfidy, she would have urged her father to carry her home immediately, if a secret wish to see Nelson had not prevented her. The discovery of her cousin's guilt wrought powerfully in her breast in favour of that unhappy youth; and though she had too certain proofs of his failings in some respects, yet she was now willing to believe that they had been greatly exaggerated by his treacherous rival.

Her father's eyes being now opened also, his tenderness for Nelson returned, and there only wanted a proper humiliation from that youth to restore him again to his confidence and esteem. He did not oppose the kind wishes of

his daughter, when she hinted her desire to make another attempt to see him. They were both preparing to pay him that charitable visit, when Syntax brought her the letter, who immediately retired, as before, without speaking.

When she saw that it was the hand-writing of Nelson, her heart fluttered with joy at the expectation of his being restored to his mind; but when the miniature presented itself to her eyes, she immediately guessed at his motives for returning it. Her heart throbbed with the utmost violence at the unpleasing idea of being scorned. Her eyes dimly gazed over the lines that were a confirmation of this ungrateful suspicion.

When

When she had read its whole purport, she sighed out, "Cruel Nelson!"—and then sat down with an affected calmness, though the tears were rolling fast down her pale cheeks.

Her father saw her situation, and fondly clasped her to his breast, while he inquired the cause of this new distress. She gave him the letter, and entreated him to keep her no longer in a place where she had been made so completely miserable.

Her father's resentment was again awakened by reading the lines which the deluded Nelson had sent her. He did not reflect, that that youth might have dictated them in the midst of his resentment

at the misrepresentations he lay under from the malice of his rival, but, in the moment of his anger, complied with his daughter's request; and, procuring places in the stage, set out with her the same evening for Bristol.

After Syntax delivered his friend's ill-natured packet, he went to make an apology to his master, Dr. F. for his long absence. From him Syntax first learned the alterations that had happened in the affairs of Miss Seymour during the time that he was attending upon Nelson; the discovery of Seymour's perfidy, and the favourable turn it had given the minds of Rachel and her father towards our unfortunate hero. He advised
Syntax

Syntax to rectify the mistakes that his misrepresentations had led him into (for Syntax related every particular that had passed with him and Nelson), and then prepare to accompany him to Bristol.

Syntax was so much enraged against himself for being the occasion of so many errors, that he could have knocked his head against a post, to be revenged on himself. He immediately left Dr. F. and was making all the haste he could towards St. Luke's Hospital, in order to undeceive Nelson, and acquaint him with the agreeable news of Rachel's constancy; but he verified the proverb, "The more haste, the less speed;" for he ran so fast, that in his hurry he

H 6 overturned.

overturned a man carrying a basket full of china, which was all broken in pieces.

The china-man immediately pursued Syntax, and, after he had stopped him, insisted upon his paying the damage; which amounting to much more than Syntax could muster, the man insisted upon his going to Wood-street Compter till he had paid it.

With much ado Syntax prevailed upon him to go to a neighbouring ale-house, from whence he dispatched a porter to Nelson, acquainting him, in a line, with his misfortune, and begging him to send a guinea by the bearer.

The porter returned in about an hour, and acquainted Syntax that

that the keepers would neither admit him, nor carry in the letter. This they had refused, agreeable to the orders they had got from Seymour, whom they looked upon as Nelson's principal relation and friend.

This unlooked-for disappointment occasioned Syntax a violent paroxysm of passion against himself and the china-merchant; whom he gave to the Devil with a hearty good will, because he would not accept of his promise to reimburse him for his loss, nor accompany him to St. Luke's, where he would pay him immediately.

The man's obstinacy put Syntax to the last shift; or, to speak without metaphor, he was obliged
to

to leave his coat and waistcoat in his possession, while he went to St. Luke's, in a hackney-coach, in his shirt and breeches. As soon as he stopped there, a croud gathered about him; for they imagined he was a madman come to be confined of his own accord. He, however, soon undeceived them, and was permitted to see his friend Nelson, who had been very impatient for his return.

Before Syntax gave him the reasons for his stay, and the cause of his uncommon *deshabille*, he related the information which he received from Dr. F. which made Nelson act the madman in a more outrageous manner than he had done during the period of his lunacy.

nacy. His rage frightened Syntax, and made the keepers think it necessary to have him chained; but when he saw them preparing for that purpose, he cooled at once, and convinced those nurses of distracted nature, that his transports were but the burst of a temporary passion, and not the ravings of a distracted mind. He wished to be discharged from the Hospital that night; but this could not be granted without the permission of the Governors. Fortunately, next day happened to be the day of their meeting; and the Surgeon giving them the necessary proofs of his being restored to his senses, leave was given him to walk out of this place of confinement.

With

With a throbbing heart, he directed his steps to the house of Mr. Seymour, being determined to see Rachel, and excite her pity and forgiveness by the most humiliating confession of his unworthiness; at the same time hoping, that the sufferings he had undergone, and the mistakes which he had been led into, would plead in his favour, obtain her forgiveness, and reinstate him in her affections.

These hopes received a severe check, when he was informed at Mr. Seymour's, that she had returned with her father to Bristol the evening before. He imagined she would not have taken this step, if the letter which he had sent her had not offended her past the hope
of

of forgiveness. His reflections were intolerably distressing. He determined to follow her, and obtain her forgiveness, or die of despair; for certain despair could not be more distressing than his present situation.

He accordingly set out next day, accompanied by Dr. F. and his friend Syntax. The former used every means in his power to lessen his grief, by giving him hopes of Rachel's forgiveness.

Rachel was in a very pitiable situation of mind before she got home; for, notwithstanding her assurances to her parent, that she was in a condition to undertake the journey, she had found it the
most

most painful task to smother her grief at leaving Nelson behind her.

When she got home, her mother helped to heighten her distress; for she railed against Nelson, and reflected upon her for having rejected the addresses of Mr. Thornton. This conduct was so opposite to what Rachel had expected, that it quite overpowered her gentle spirits, and obliged her to give way to her grief in a flood of tears. Every object added to her melancholy, by reminding her of the once happy days she had enjoyed with Nelson; days that could not be recalled; and which only added to her misery, by comparing them with those she had now to expect under the up-
braidings

braidings of her mother, and the neglect of the man she loved.

After indulging her thoughts with the most gloomy prospect of despair, she would take a hasty resolution to conquer her passion by reflecting upon his errors, and magnifying his offences against herself.—“ He had given her a sufficient cause to be offended against him on the first day of his leaving Bristol—Denied himself to her father—Returned the pledge of her love, with offensive and injurious reflections against her, at a moment that her heart felt the return of all its former tenderness for him—and he is now, perhaps, laughing with a favourite rival at the cleverness of his conduct,

“conduct, in giving so much pain
“to my credulous heart.”

Thus did she endeavour to bring her mind to think of him with indifference, by recollecting his crimes and offences: but she found her efforts vain; for, if she thought it possible at one moment, her heart convinced her the next, that she would sacrifice her own life to save his. She gave herself up then entirely to despair: that, joined to the censures of her mother, rendered life a burden; and the hours that had been formerly passed in cheerfulness and peace, were now spent in melancholy despondency.

THE MEETING.

The third morning after she got home, she rose earlier than common, and went into the garden to indulge her gloomy reflections. She involuntarily wandered towards a fish-pond at the bottom of the garden, and there sat herself down on a seat covered with honey-suckles, which the Quaker had caused to be made for his convenience when he diverted himself with fishing.

Here she revolved many a bitter thought over again in her mind, while she indulged her tears without restraint. The water being before her, despair suggested the

the impious thought, that it could soon put a period to her misery. She trembled with horror at the intruding monster, and, raising up her hands and eyes to Heaven, with fervency and unfeigned piety implored the Divine Being never to leave her so much to herself, as ever to think of so daring an outrage against Heaven again.

While she was offering up this earnest ejaculation, she heard a voice exclaim from the summer-house over against, "O stop, for Heaven's sake!" Lifting her eyes towards it, she saw Nelson rushing towards her with the utmost swiftness. She immediately gave a scream, and fell to the ground. Nelson sprung with redoubled

doubled speed to her assistance. He raised her from the ground; but he was so weak (through want of rest and sustenance, his anxious impatience not having allowed him to partake of either for almost three days before), that he was not able to carry her to the house. He attempted to call for help; but weakness and surprise had deprived him of voice. He sat down upon the earth; and reclining her body upon his breast, kissed the lifeless cheek of his unfortunate fair one, whom he was totally unable to assist. He made a last effort to raise himself, and bring some water to sprinkle on her face; but his ability was gone—a cold sweat had seized him all over—his
eyes

eyes grew dim—every object disappeared in an instant—and he fainted away under her.

Fortunately Mr. Seymour perceived them at that moment from his window, while he was putting on his clothes, and ran to their assistance. But before he had got to them Rachel had recovered, and was weeping over her lifeless lover, whom she imagined to be dead. Mr. Seymour, however, undeceived her; for, by throwing water on his face, Nelson soon gave symptoms of returning life; and in a few minutes he was able to accompany them into the house.

The Reader may easily imagine what passed between them when they got there: suffice it therefore

to

to say, that Nelson pleaded his cause so effectually, and palliated his conduct so much by relating the mistakes which Syntax's representations had led him into, that not only his amiable mistress forgave him, but her father also relaxed of his severity, and received him again into good will and favour; and in a short time gave him the greatest proof of his confidence and esteem, by giving him her hand in marriage.

Then it was that this amiable pair began to taste the most supreme felicity; being possessed of the first wish of their hearts. She banished his failings from her remembrance, and endeavoured by every thing that her fond affection

could think of, to make him banish it from his own, that his happiness might have no allay by disagreeable reflections.

These endeavours convinced Nelson of her angelic worth, and endeared her more and more to him every day ; and before they had been three months married, he found that she far surpassed every thing that his fond imagination had formed of her.

Like the generality of Novel Writers, we ought here to conclude our story, having blessed our hero with the possession of his amiable mistress ; but this would be breaking

ing

ing off in the middle, and before we had related the catastrophe upon which the story is principally founded, and would ill suit with the title of the book. It is therefore thought necessary to continue the story of Nelson's conduct and misfortunes after his union with the charming Quaker.

For the first nine months after that event took place, neither Nelson nor his wife knew what a languid moment was. Every object that attracted his observation, excited her attention; and led them to a thousand subjects of conversation, wherein they occasionally displayed themselves to be possessed of many amiable qualities. There was but one thing wanting

I 2

that

that would add to their felicity, viz. a tender pledge of love; and of this they had soon an hopeful prospect. While she appeared to be in this situation Nelson's attention naturally began to be more anxiously taken up in his attendance upon her; he was almost afraid of trusting her out of his sight, lest she should meet with an accident.

There is a pleasant walk near Bristol, shaded by bushy trees, and surrounded by a variety of beautiful prospects and rural objects. This was the place to which Mrs. Nelson resorted when she had an inclination to enjoy the sweets of summer's balmy breezes.—In these little excursions Nelson was her constant companion and most agreeable gallant.

One

One evening, about ten months after they were married, as they were taking their customary walk, and reminding one another of many little circumstances that happened in the commencement of their intimacy, an object appeared at a little distance, that made his heart palpitate with disagreeable alarms. This was Mrs. Spruce, the only object in the world whom he wished never to behold.—If his wife had not been with him, he would have instantly turned round in order to avoid her: but as that was not the case, Mrs. S. met him directly in the face; and addressed him with the confidence of an old and intimate acquaintance, not-

13 withstanding

withstanding the distant behaviour he put on to her.

She told him, "She was overjoyed with her good fortune in meeting him, as it was what she had been wishing for ever since her coming to Bristol—That she had been inquiring after him in London, and was informed of his return to Bristol.—But pray, Mr. Nelson," said she, in a half whisper, "is it true that you are married?" Upon his answering in the affirmative, she made a ceremonious curtsy to his wife, and wished him joy with a satirical smile, and a familiar shake of the hand; which Rachel observing, it occasioned no little combustion in her breast against her rival.

Whether

Whether Mrs. Spruce perceived what was passing in the breast of Nelson and his wife, who were both very anxious to get rid of her company, and was offended; or, whether it was the influence of an unlawful passion at the moment, cannot be determined: but she presently disengaged herself from the company of those that attended her, and came and joined herself to that of Mr. Nelson and his wife; telling him, by way of excuse, that "old friends ought not to part so easily."

He would have given an hundred pounds to get rid of her, or to find a proper excuse to avoid giving her an invitation to his house. But as neither of these could be

I 4 obtained,

obtained, without being guilty of ill-breeding—he was obliged to solicit her company home, as if it had been doing him an honour or a pleasure.

Having now the only object before him that had ever warmed his heart with passion, Nelson could easily make a comparison between them, and judge of their respective merits.—In external appearance Mrs. Spruce was far superior to his wife: her person was handsome, somewhat approaching to the *embonpoint*, her complexion florid, her eyes dark, and sparkling with *la feu amoureuse*. Mrs. Nelson's person was not so splendidly attracting—but the softness and delicacy of her manners, rendered her

her every way an interesting object. The first was spoken of as a *fine woman*; the latter characterised as a *sweet creature*, possessed of all the soft and amiable qualities that imagination annexes to the female character. To these the former had not the least pretensions, having lost every vestige of female delicacy in the course of a year's dissipation.

Notwithstanding Mrs. Nelson's confidence in her husband, she could not behold the figure of her rival without feeling some emotion. This was still more augmented by the free behaviour of that lady, who, forgetful of the warnings which dreadful experience had

given her before, and unmindful of the decorum of her sex, familiarly leaned upon Mr. Nelson's arm during their walk home, and took every occasion to excite his attention by a thousand little coquetries. His recollection made him aware of encouraging her freedoms, as well from the idea of giving pain to his wife, as from an apprehension of falling into the same snare that he had twice fallen into before. He perfectly knew the danger of encouraging the advances of a fine woman, and how liable the human heart is to be caught in the inticing snares thrown out by women of intrigue; and Mrs. Spruce's behaviour soon convinced

convinced him, that her principles were entirely new modelled to modern notions of gallantry.

His reflections upon this subject excited disagreeable ideas : for he could not help charging himself with the guilt of being accessory to the ruin of her principles. These, however, had never been well founded ; otherwise she could not have so soon divested herself of the modesty and delicacy of her sex, as to have gone the extreme length which she had done in the course of sixteen months.—Before she had been two months in London, her conduct gave Mr. S. the most serious concern. He remonstrated ; but she only gave more cause for people to censure, and at

last gave up all sense of shame and decorum, by eloping and living publicly with one of her gallants. The husband then obtained redress against her keeper, and was freed from his disgraceful partner by a divorce.

Mr. Nelson was altogether ignorant of these affairs; otherwise he would have been highly blameable for allowing his breeding and punctilio to admit her to the company of his wife. He understood that the death of her mother had brought her to Bristol; and therefore comforted himself with the hopes of being soon rid of her company. He ardently wished for that event every day; for he perceived that her conduct had given
serious

serious concern to his wife, whose frequent sighs and occasional thoughtfulness gave him great uneasiness.

Upon this discovery, he was greatly puzzled how to behave, or in what manner he could get rid of her frequent visits to his house. If he studied to keep himself out of the way when she came, she prolonged her stay, so that he must have entirely banished himself from the society of his wife to avoid her; and he could not reconcile himself to the idea of making her acquainted with the uneasiness which her company gave to his wife, as it would subject the latter to the shafts of her ridicule, and probably
provoke

provoke the former to persist in her visits through mere spite.

He therefore determined to carry his wife into the country for a week or two, hoping that Mrs. S. would be obliged to return to London in that time. He accordingly set out the next morning, leaving his house to the care of his maid servant and shopman, with orders to send all letters to Mr. Seymour's.—His wife being acquainted with his motives for taking this journey, was thereby convinced of his regard ; and the uneasy sensation she had felt vanished at once, and left her mind its former tranquillity and happiness.

As soon as Mrs. Spruce was made acquainted with Nelson's sudden

sudden journey, she divined his motives for it, by comparing his conduct to her with it for a few days before, wherein he had studiously kept himself out of the way when she happened to visit at his house. Rage and resentment instantly took place in her breast, at the idea of her charms being slighted by the man whom she still loved, and wished to attach to herself. The criminality of stealing his affections from his wife, did not give this dissipated woman the least degree of uneasiness; she rather indulged the idea that she had a prior right to his affections, from having been the first object of his choice.

THE

THE FEMALE SEDUCER.

She immediately set her brains to work, to contrive means to make him jealous of his wife, as it was his attachment to her that stood most in the way of her unprincipled wishes. If she obtained that, she hoped every thing else from the rage that jealousy would inspire him with against his wife.

She found it necessary to have some one of Nelson's domestics in her interest. She temporised with the maid, and found her perfectly agreeable to her wishes. A few guineas, and a promise of many more

more in a few weeks, prevailed on that mercenary wretch to give up to her the private anecdotes of the family, and bind herself by an oath, to give her intriguing employer all the assistance she was able, in the execution of the hellish plot she was contriving against the peace of our happy couple.

She then gave Susan orders to inform Mr. Nelson and his wife, when they returned, that she had been obliged to go to Bath the day after they went to the country, but would call upon them at her return from thence, which would be in a few weeks.

She then went and procured herself a suit of men's clothes; for she did not mean to disgrace her sex

sex in her own habit. In these, after disguising herself, by painting her eye-brows, colouring her hair, and various other artifices, she thought herself sufficiently secure from detection, even by Nelson himself.

Being informed of the coffee-house that he usually frequented, she introduced herself there, and made up an acquaintance with a young beau, well known in the place by the designation of the Lounging Rake. She pitched upon him as the most proper person to further her design upon Nelson, because he was remarkable for talking publicly of his amours, and it was for her interest to get as bad a name in that way as possible.

Before

Before Nelson's return from the country, she had made herself as well known in the coffee-house as her new friend. Her conversation, like his, was entirely upon her amours, and the comical adventures that happened to her in the course of them, from the jealousy of husbands or lovers. In short, they related so many stories of their successes in affairs of that nature, that jealous-pated people would have been apt to conclude they were perfect cormorants in devouring innocence and chastity, and that no woman could resist them. People listened to them without being offended, however; for, as they never heard their wives' or mistresses' names made use

use of, it was no concern of theirs ; —it was rather a piece of entertainment to hear them.

The day after Nelson's return from the country, business led him, as usual, to the coffee-house. Mrs. Spruce soon found means to attract his attention, as well as that of many others, by the coxcomb airs she occasionally gave herself.— Something in her voice struck Nelson. He imagined he had heard it somewhere ; and although she took care to disguise it as much as possible by affectation, yet it seemed familiar to his ear. He examined her face ; but that was so artfully disguised by the painting of her eyebrows, and a certain liquid she used to make her
appear

appear swarthy, added to the manner in which she dressed her hair, that he had not the least recollection of ever seeing it before. She took care also not to let him have a full view of it. Neither could he have any conception of her stature, as he never saw her in any other than a sitting posture. By these artifices she hoped to put it out of his power to detect her; for that would have defeated her project at once.

Procuring a jeweller to make her a handsome gold locket of a particular form, the figures on which were two hearts interwoven, and under them the initials of Nelson's name, she took care to shew this to her brother beau, at a
moment

moment that she saw Nelson's attention directed towards them; telling the other, he meant to present it to a young lady for whom he had a very warm penchant, but who had cost him a good deal of trouble before he had got her to surrender to his arms. When she had sufficiently displayed this, so as to give Nelson an idea of it if he should happen to see it again, she began to contrive means, how she could get it into the possession of his wife.

Governed still by the Demon of unlawful love, she procured a failor's dress, and metamorphosed herself from the foppish beau to a jolly son of the ocean. In this habit she was to pass herself as Susan's

fan's sweetheart just returned from a long voyage. Having contrived a proper story for the occasion, she went to Nelson's house, at the time he usually went upon 'Change. Her coadjutor Susan was so perfectly ignorant of her in this new dress, that it had almost discovered her: for, no sooner had she opened the door, than this pretended tar clasped her in his arms, and began kissing her; and Susan screaming out through surprise, her noise brought Mrs. Nelson down stairs to see what was the matter. Mrs. Spruce, however, had discovered herself to Sue: she therefore immediately informed her mistress, that she had been surprised by an old acquaintance
whom

she did not at first recollect. This being the case, Mrs. Nelson thought her company might not be agreeable; she therefore left them to themselves, and walked up stairs again.

The counterfeit sailor then gave Sue an account of her reason for assuming her present disguise; which was, to endeavour to get Mrs. Nelson prevailed upon to purchase the locket which we have before mentioned. For this purpose, Susan was instructed to carry it and several other trinkets up stairs to shew to her mistress, with the story, that her lover wished to dispose of them, in order to raise money to send to his poor mother. Susan let the story lose nothing in
the

the telling; for as the purchase of the locket, &c. was to be her own, she ornamented the story with the distressed situation of her lover's mother, who was entirely maintained by his filial piety; adding, that as he was obliged to go abroad again in a few days, he wished much to dispose of the trinkets to leave her the money.

A story of this nature was well calculated to work upon the benevolent feelings of Mrs. Nelson; she involuntarily pulled out her purse, and gave Susan half-a-guinea to give her lover, telling her, at the same time to return him the trinkets.

This, however, was not what Sue was wishing for: instead, therefore,

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of

of carrying them away as ordered, she began to examine them. Taking up the locket and looking at it, she exclaimed, "Lord! what a monstrous beautiful locket! this is none of your English manufacturers—I warrant this was made by the Hottentots, or some outlandish sort of people—and I dares say that is some of their lingo upon it, as the sailors call it," added she, pointing to the cypher upon it.

Mrs. Nelson smiled at Susan's conjectures; and taking the locket from her hand, immediately perceived this outlandish lingo to be only the cypher aforesaid.

"A. N.!" cries Susan, "Lord, ma'm! was there ever a more comicaler

"micaler circumstance heard on?
 "Why, that is the very name of
 "my master."

"It is uncommon enough," said
 Mrs. Nelson, "how it should hap-
 "pen so—I wonder how he came
 "by it.—It must have been pur-
 "posely made for some person."

"Please the pigs, I'll ask him,"
 said Sue, scampering down stairs.
 After staying a few minutes, she
 returned with the story, that her
 fictitious lover had purchased it,
 with several others of different
 cyphers, from a Venetian mer-
 chant in Italy. "L—d, ma'm!"
 added Susan, "what would you
 "think he axes for it? As I am
 "a living creature, he only axes

"one single guinea; and by the living jingo I think its worth two!"

Mrs. Nelson, however, was not of so covetous a disposition as to buy a thing merely because it was a bargain. She liked it because the cyphers were those of her beloved husband; and if it had not been opposite to the principles of the Quakers, who set no value upon ornaments of that nature, she would have purchased it without more ado, merely for that very reason.—She was putting it again among the other trinkets, in order to return them; which Susan observing, she immediately exclaimed, "I wish it had the *nitials* of somebody that I knows—I should

"should not part with it for twice
"the sum."

Mrs. Nelson considering this speech as reflecting upon herself—as if she had more regard for a guinea, than affection for her husband; and this being a suspicion which she never wished any one to entertain of her, she involuntarily pulled out her purse, and giving Susan a guinea, ordered her to return the other trinkets to her sweetheart.

Soon after she had made this purchase, she was going to stick the locket in her handkerchief; but reflecting that it had not been made for her, nor presented to her by her Nelson—the only circumstance that ought to make her

value a thing of that kind) her wearing it would appear more like vanity than a testimony of her affection for him. Many a woman, she knew, would wear such things if presented to them by an acquaintance; but as her manner of thinking was of a more delicate turn, she did not think any man on earth intitled to that honour unless it was her husband. For these reasons she hid it in a private drawer, and ordered Susan never to mention a syllable of the matter to any one.—As Susan was not acquainted with the extent of Mrs. Spruce's scheme, she naturally concluded that her mistress's locking it up would intirely defeat her design. It was of little consequence to her, however;

however; she had gained a guinea and a half by the business, and therefore sagaciously observed, "Let them laugh that wins." In order, however, to keep her word with so good a paymaster, she asked her mistress's leave to go abroad for an hour; and having obtained it, she went and gave her an account how her locket was disposed of.

Mrs. Spruce, as well as Susan, concluded at first, that this part of her scheme was rendered entirely useless; but after reflecting a few minutes, she began to form fresh hopes from the circumstance itself. After questioning Susan, therefore, very particularly about the place where Mrs. Nelson had deposited

the locket, she gave her another half guinea for her fidelity, and then dismissed her.

Next morning, as usual, she attended at the coffee-house for Nelson's appearance; he, however, did not make his appearance all that day, being kept at home by company. Next morning, however, she was but too successful; Nelson made his appearance at the usual time, and sat down in his usual box, his back being exactly against that of this infamous woman. She had taken care, the day before, to make an appointment with the booby whom we have mentioned before, as he was to be an innocent instrument in working on the jealousy of our unsuspecting youth.

As

As soon, therefore, as she perceived the moment she wished for, which was when Nelson was not taken up in conversing with any one, she began as usual to talk of her late adventures in the amorous way.—“ I told you,” said she to the beau, in a whisper loud enough to be heard by Nelson, “ of my intention of giving the locket “ I shewed to you three days ago, “ to a favourite lady of mine: now “ you shall hear how I came on.”

—Observing Nelson’s attention to be taken by what she was going to relate, she proceeded to give her companion a fabricated story of a thousand falsities, but all calculated to work on the feelings of our hero; whose wife was so dis-

tinctly described, that although she did not name her, it was almost impossible for him not to know who was meant.

He was so fully persuaded that it was her, from description as well as many other circumstances, that a thousand daggers were fixed in his breast. Jealousy had not yet, however, taken place in his mind; he was only inspired with rage against the wretch that dared to boast of favours he had not obtained. His confidence was not to be shaken by report; for he had such an exalted idea of her virtue and fidelity, that he would not have believed her guilty upon the oaths of a thousand such coxcombs.

He

He could hardly restrain himself from chastising the infamous calumniator upon the spot. The consideration that it might be the means of propagating the falsehood publicly against his wife restrained him, and made him defer giving way to his resentment till another time ; for he knew too well, when once a report of that nature is made public, there are plenty that would credit it upon the slightest foundation, and his interference would make it appear as if he was convinced of it himself.

Mrs. Spruce easily saw the situation of his mind, from the distortion of his features : when she caught a glimpse of his eye, fury was painted in his look. " He is

"a charming fellow, however," said
 she to herself; "and I can bear
 "these frowns for a time, in hopes
 "of being afterwards rewarded by
 "his smiles. It is too great a bless-
 "ing for one woman to enjoy all
 "these to herself—and who has a
 "prior right to me in sharing them
 "with a wife?—Curse on my va-
 "nity, and my mother's prudence!
 "—If it had not been for them,
 "I might have possessed him all
 "to myself. How transporting the
 "thought! with him I could enjoy
 "bliss in a desert!"

While she was employed in these
 rapturous ideas, Nelson finding
 his mind too much agitated to al-
 low him to attend to business of
 any sort, left the coffee-house and
 went

went home. He was thoughtful and melancholy the whole day. "How precarious is all sublunary happiness," said he to himself, "and how easily does the tongue of malice darken our most pleasing prospects! O Rachel! how little is he acquainted with thee, that can have the cruelty to charge thee with the smallest deviation from duty; and what a monster must he be, then, that wishes to stain thy name with the foulest of crimes! No human being could be so wicked—some Demon had possessed me with the idea that it was my wife; or perhaps," said he sighing, "it has obtained admission in a moment
" of

“of insanity, the forerunner of
 “another fit of madness.”

This last suspicion made him so low-spirited, that he had not courage to venture abroad, lest a fit of madness should come upon him in the street. He remained at home for two days, during which his amiable wife attended upon him with the utmost affection and anxiety. He was obliged to hide his suspicions from her, lest the apprehension of his madness should shake her too much in the situation she was then in: he therefore made her believe, that his disorder was only a violent head-ach. His melancholy apprehensions had almost left him on the third day; and he
 looked

looked so cheerful, to what he had done the day before, that Mrs. Nelson was prevailed upon to leave him, in order to accompany her mother in a short airing into the country.

While Nelson was left alone, Susan, who had received instructions from her artful employer, came up stairs, and asked him for something which she knew was locked up in the cabinet in which Mrs. Nelson had put the locket; and therefore expected that he would find that in searching for the other.

She was perfectly right in her conjecture; for, going to look for what she asked for, he unfortunately happened to cast his eye
upon

upon the private drawer into which Mrs. Nelson had put the fatal locket. The malicious story striking his mind at that moment with redoubled force, he pulled out the drawer to satisfy himself of its falsity. He soon found what he wished not to be there, rolled up in a piece of paper; which he had no sooner opened, than he was almost petrified with grief and madness. Clapping both hands upon his forehead, he reeled to a chair, and sat down for a few minutes in the most melancholy posture of grief. Susan again repeated her demands; but, instead of giving her attention, he rose up, and walked about the room, saying to himself, "This is too much. Mer-

"eiful

“ciful G—d! why did I live to
 “be made the egregious dupe of
 “a false woman?”——Susan asking
 him a third time for what she
 wanted, he was too much engaged
 in misery to think of any thing
 else; and therefore turned her out
 of the room, that he might have
 freedom to indulge his maddening
 reflections.

Jealousy is the most thriving
 weed in the mind of man: from a
 small seed it springs up almost in-
 stantly to a gigantic stature. Every
 little circumstance is recollected,
 and changed by its poisonous in-
 fluence to the same deadly colour
 as itself; and in a little time the
 mind will be so entirely overrun by
 it, that love, humanity, justice,
 and

and almost every virtue in the human soul, will be entirely changed or obscured.

————— Trifles light as air,
Are to the jealous confirmation strong
As proofs of holy writ.

Such was the influence it had over the mind of Nelson, who only recollected a thousand circumstances of his wife's fondness, on purpose to confirm him of her falseness. Twenty times did he resolve to present her with the locket, and charge her with her guilt; "but what will that avail?" said he to himself.—"If she is far gone in guilt, it will only exasperate her to give more open proofs.

“proofs of her lost virtue; and if
 “she has but just entered the path
 “of vice, and has still a sense of
 “shame remaining, it may over-
 “power her, and be the death of
 “my innocent offspring, *That is*
 “most certainly mine; let me not
 “therefore destroy it by my just
 “resentment against its mother’s
 “crime.—Perhaps she has been
 “betrayed by the cunning craft of
 “the deceitful villain: if so, kind-
 “ness may reclaim her, and bring
 “her back to the path of recti-
 “tude.”

Hearing his wife’s knock, he
 hastily deposited the fatal locket
 in its place again; and, summon-
 ing all his moderation, he endea-
 voured to compose his features.

to their usual serenity, in order that he might not give her cause to suspect that he had discovered the proof of her guilt. He found this so hard a matter, when he saw her enter the room with innocence and sweetness beaming on her countenance, that he was obliged to retire for a moment to another apartment to give himself time to recover. "Oh! who would imagine that deceit and guilt could lodge under so fair a disguise?" said he to himself.—
 "Oh false appearance!

"What avails our wisdom, our sagacity,

"Opposed to shields like these?"

In vain did he strive to hide the distress that preyed upon his heart,
 from

from the penetrating eye of his amiable wife. She heard him sigh, and saw him frequently buried in dejection and thoughtfulness; and at other times stalk about the room with a discomposed air. She was greatly alarmed with these unfavourable appearances, and began to suspect that some misfortune in business had occasioned them, which he was unwilling to inform her of. "Ah! Nelson," said she to him, clasping her arms tenderly about his neck, "why will you not make me a sharer of your uneasiness? Tell me what it is that distresses you.—Though I am not capable of directing, yet I may lessen your troubles by sharing them with you. Trust them
" in

"in this faithful bosom. Heaven,
 "perhaps, may inspire me with the
 "means of averting or overcoming
 "the evils that oppress you.
 "God knows with what willingness
 "I could sacrifice my life to make
 "you happy."

"Rachel," said he, with a look
 that went to her soul, "does your
 "heart accord with your words?—
 "or am I to consider them as the
 "common language of your sex?
 "But I am a fool to ask you the
 "question," added he, rekindling
 with jealousy, and walking quickly
 through the room. "No woman
 "ever shewed more signs of affec-
 "tion than you have done."

"Or had greater reason for doing
 "so," said she with a heavenly smile,
 totally

totally ignorant of the severity which the conclusion of his speech conveyed. "But put me not off
 "with these replies, Nelson. You
 "are not happy; and it is proper
 "that I should share in your mis-
 "fortunes, as I have been a par-
 "taker, a large partaker in your
 "happiness."

"Ask me no more about it," said he, taking his hat. "If you are
 "ignorant, there let it rest. Would
 "to God it had for ever remained
 "in darkness!"

"For Heaven's sake, Nelson,
 "leave me not in this uncertainty;
 "resolve my anxious doubts. If
 "unforeseen misfortunes in busi-
 "ness have deprived us of fortune,
 "let not that oppress you: we
 "have

"have still the means of happiness
 "in our power. I can live with
 "thee in a cottage; and if serenity
 "and content sit upon thy face, I
 "shall be truly blest."

"Fortune! what is the loss of
 "fortune? Had Heaven rooted
 "up my possessions, shipwrecked
 "my far brought riches in the
 "haven—and, when deprived of
 "all, turned me adrift in the world
 "without a friend, but thee and
 "our unsullied honour, I could
 "have borne it.—By Heaven, it is
 "too much: he shall make good
 "his words, or pay me with his
 "life."

Being wrought up to the highest
 pitch of rage, he left his wife to
 brood over the multitude of melan-
 choly

choly reflections with which his strange behaviour had filled her, and went in search of the villain that had destroyed his happiness; resolved either to make him clear his wife's fame, or perish with himself.

THE RESOLUTION OF REVENGE.

He was informed at the coffee-house, that the person he was asking after was just gone, and had passed round the corner. He followed the way they directed him, and soon came within sight of the object of his search; whom he was quickly making up to, when he perceived Susan stop and talk with

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her.

her. This was another strong confirmation of his jealous suspicions; for he immediately concluded that she was the go-between betwixt his wife and her gallant, and had been dispatched by her to warn him of danger. Enraged still more by this fresh circumstance, he was quickly making up to them, in order to make her the witness of his just revenge, and be the first messenger to inform his perfidious wife of the vengeance he had taken on her gallant. But before he had got within two hundred yards of them, they both entered a house together. He determined, however, to wait for his rival's re-appearance; and for that purpose went into a public-house

house directly in view of that where he had seen him enter. After waiting here for more than an hour, his patience was quite worn out: leaving it, therefore, he went and knocked at the door into which he had seen them enter. He was informed by the servant that opened it, that Mr. O'Bryen (the name that Mrs. Spruce had assumed) had gone out above an hour ago, and would not be back that night. Nelson insisted that he had seen him go in, and that he must be at home, as he had not perceived him come out again; but she soon cleared up his mistake, by shewing him the house had a back-door into another street.

L 2

His

His rage not being in the least abated by this disappointment, he was returning home in a very discontented disposition ; but he had not gone far before he heard himself called by name. Turning about, he perceived Mrs. Spruce coming towards him, dressed as if she had just come off a journey.

The reader will no doubt be surprised at her sudden metamorphosis. She had observed Nelson dogging her, and saw him go into the public-house. Suspecting his design from that circumstance, she hastily went to her old lodgings ; and dressing herself in the manner of going on a journey, she made haste back, in hopes of interrupting him

him in his return; flattering herself, that his present disposition of mind would make him become an easy prey to her insidious arts.— So far Fortune favoured her, that she just got sight of him as he was coming out of the house where she had resided in the character of a gentleman.

She no sooner got up to him, than, staring at him with affected surprise, she exclaimed, “ In the
 “ name of wonder, what makes
 “ you look so peevish? Are you
 “ well?—or is your wife ill? You
 “ look so dejected and melan-
 “ choly, that I hardly could know
 “ you for the person I saw three
 “ weeks ago.”

L 3

Not

Not wishing to give her a suspicion of the true cause of his chagrin, he answered, "he had been poorly for a few days back, and was not yet entirely free from complaints."

This gave her an opportunity of assuming an affected concern; a thing that she was complete mistress of. This being the opportunity she had all along been plotting for, having conceived the moment of his jealousy against his wife, to be the fittest for effecting her purpose; every art, therefore, was used to augment that hideous passion, and she found none of them more successful than praising his wife. There is not a more effectual

effectual way to excite hatred, than to praise a person that has grossly injured one. He would have listened to these with pleasure for hours, a few days before; but they now grated on his ears, and excited the most disagreeable sensations.

“ Ah Nelson!” said this artful woman, “ had I known what a
 “ treasure you had in possessing
 “ the heart of that angelic woman,
 “ no power on earth should have
 “ made me trespass upon her right
 “ to your entire affection. Yes,”
 said she sighing, and looking tenderly at him, “ I would have bridled the most ardent passion that
 “ ever inhabited the breast of
 “ woman, till the grave had freed

"me from its tortures, sooner
 "than deprive her of one particle
 "of your affection, by giving way
 "to the dictates of an extreme
 "love. Nay, be not afraid," con-
 tinued she, seeing him look per-
 plexed at hearing her confession;
 "you are no longer in danger
 "from a frail woman's fondness:
 "a few days will carry me for ever
 "from this place, and allow the
 "best of women to reign unrival-
 "led in your affections. Ab-
 "sence cannot secure me from
 "envying her lot; but it may
 "save me from many a danger-
 "ous situation, which prudence
 "might not be able to make me
 "surmount."

The

The wisest men are often made fools by the arts of light women, who can mould them to almost every thing they please: they can excite them to deeds of cruelty, or soften them to mildness and gentleness.—If you examine the dispositions of both sexes in affairs of love, you will find, that when a man makes a discovery of his passion for a woman of this character, she bridles up and puts on the most haughty airs, and endeavours on every occasion to make him the butt of her wit and ridicule; but if a woman makes a like confession to a man, he involuntarily conceives a tenderness for her, and he thinks he discovers beauties and qualities in her, which

L 5. otherwise

otherwise he would not have seen.
—In like manner did the crafty speech of Mrs. Spruce work upon the susceptible heart of Nelson: she never appeared in a more advantageous light to him, than she did at that moment, while praising the woman that robbed her of his heart; and dreading the dangers of falling into another criminal indulgence, “How much injustice have not I done this woman,” said he to himself, “in thinking her principles depraved and corrupt! She has more cause to charge me with that character, who, having less passion, was therefore more criminal.”

FEMALE ARTIFICE.

While he was making this reflection, and considering her conduct as nothing worse than that of the best of her sex (for jealousy, like the jaundice, made him now view the sex) alike, frail and inconstant, Mrs. Spruce purposely made a slip and fell; and when he had lifted her up, pretending she had hurt her ankle, she intreated the favour of allowing her to lean on his arm to her lodgings. His house being nearer than her own, he intreated her to go there; but this she absolutely refused, under the pretext that her company would only fill his wife with uneasy suspicions. "No, Nelson,"

said she, " I will never more enter your doors; you have suffered enough from my weakness already."

This only made him insist the more strongly upon her going to his house; for the idea of distressing his wife with the dread of another's inconstancy no longer pained him; it rather gave his breast, now filled with jealousy and resentment, a kind of pleasure: he therefore insisted so strongly, that Mrs. Spruce gave up her original design so far, as to accompany him—in hopes that she might be able to make the breach still wider between them. In this she displayed herself a perfect politician, and well acquainted with the nature of jealousy,

jealousy ; which is seldom extinguished, till one or other of the objects has severely felt its effects.

As Mrs. Nelson had been thrown into the most disagreeable reflections by her husband's singular behaviour when he left her, she was therefore agreeably surprised at seeing him return with his usual cheerfulness, although he was accompanied by one whom she did not wish for. He had forced this cheerfulness upon his countenance through pique, and determined to play at cross purposes, by fluttering and gallanting with Mrs. Spruce, merely because it fed the monster that inhabited his breast, with the prospect of giving

giving pain to his much-asperfed wife.—If he therefore faw her look ferious, he appeared more gay; and if fhe looked the leaft awry upon Mrs. S. then he was fure to treat *her* with unufual gallantry and freedom; who only repulfed him, to make him more forward and lefs on his guard.

Mrs. Nelson was not fo blind as not to perceive the uncommon alteration in his behaviour; but though fhe faw it, and her heart was almoft dying within her at the fight; yet fhe prudently refolved not to make him confcious that fhe perceived it. She therefore ftruggled with her feelings, to make herfelf appear as cheerful as poffible; for fhe knew, that when a woman
gives

gives way to peevishness and jealousy, it is the direct way to deprive herself of a husband's affection, if he has any remaining for her.

He blindly continued to play at cross purposes, and to aggravate her feelings, as long as Mrs. Spruce thought fit to remain; and though it was not dark when she rose to go home, yet he insisted upon accompanying her, because he imagined he had not yet sufficiently vexed his wife by his behaviour already.

Mrs. Nelson could hardly restrain her composure till they were gone; so much was she hurt with his new and unaccountable behaviour. As soon as they left the house,

house, she gave free liberty to her tears, till she was thrown into hysterics; and from these into a premature labour, in which she was delivered of a dead child, and hardly escaped with life herself.

We must do Nelson the justice to say, that he was merely guided by pique and resentment in his behaviour to her. He had not the least thought of going the lengths that Mrs. Spruce's arts too fatally carried him; nay, he would have spurned at the mere idea of such a thing with indignation. His fall will shew the weakness of human virtue, when attacked by the combined strength of beauty and artifice; and how careful mankind ought to be in
blindly

blindly giving way to passion and resentment, so as to allow themselves, in the smallest degree, to act contrary to humanity and justice. — By feeding his blind resentment in the manner he did, he furnished his artful seducer with the means of attacking him with advantage; and by stifling his affection and tenderness for his wife, he deprived himself of a shield that would have made him invulnerable to her every art.

The artful woman could hardly contain her transports before Mrs. Nelson, at observing the advantages which this accidental visit had given her. Every art and charm were made use of to maintain the ground she had gained by it:
and

and sober reflection being entirely banished from his mind, which was occupied and distracted with a hundred different guests, who made it a scene of confusion and uproar by their opposite contentions; he was made incapable of perceiving his danger, and like a lamb was led to the slaughter, and, like it, was unconscious where his seducer was hurrying him to, till it was beyond his power to escape.

If her misconduct on former occasions was but the effect of accident, it was not so in this; for in this she played the most determined and artful schemes of seduction from first to last; and like the Demon of wickedness, her satisfaction was displayed when her conquest:

conquest was complete. The transports of her heart, and fond careffes, told Nelson in a moment, that her late pretensions to virtue, and regard for his wife, were merely clokes to hide her hypocrisy and luft. His infatuation was now in some measure at an end, by his eyes being opened to fee the artifices of his betrayer. Words are incapable of conveying an idea of the horror that he felt upon the occafion: thofe alone, who having ftrong principles of virtue in their breafts, and whose confciences are not feared by repeated acts of guilt, can have a right conception of his remorse.

THE CONSEQUENCE.

He walked about the room with inconceivable agony painted upon his countenance; and when the infamous wretch endeavoured to calm his spirits by the fondest caresses, he spurned her from him with rage and indignation; for she now appeared to his eyes, clothed in all the deformities of shame and wickedness.

“Wretch, begone!” cried he,
“thy infamous arts have ruined
“me for ever.—Oh! if my wife
“is innocent—and something tells
“me that she is, where shall I
“hide this guilty head?—How
“shall I approach her?” added:
he, taking his hat, and going out
of

of the room. "Her virtues will
"render me for ever contemptible
"in my own eyes, and my vices
"will make me appear equally so
"in her's."

Mrs. Spruce attempted to oppose his passage out of the house. In her struggles, she fatally pushed him into the room where she had a few hours before thrown off her disguise, and which in her hurry she had forgot to put away.

No sooner did he get sight of these well-known clothes, than a croud of circumstances rushed upon his mind, which told him instantly that he had all along been made the dupe of the infamous wretch before him. His rage redoubled, when he recollected that
these

these arts had caused him to conceive the most unpardonable suspicions against his angelic wife, and to treat her with killing indifference. For though he could not yet divine how the fatal locket came to be in his wife's cabinet, he was fully persuaded it had been got there by the artifices of the object before him.

"Wretch," said he, taking up a sword that was lying beside the clothes, and pointing it at her breast, "relate the particulars of thy hellish arts, or this moment shall be thy last."

She fell upon her knees, and was confessing her guilt, when a knocking was heard at the street-door; and presently Syntax's voice

was

was heard in the passage, insisting that Mr. Nelson was in the house. Presently he burst into the room. Horror was painted on his face: he called on Nelson with a voice of rage, to plunge the sword into the breast of the wretch that was still trembling on her knees before him. "Kill her," cried he again, "and rid the world of a monster, whose infamous arts have destroyed thy child, and will be the death of thy wife."

This was enough for Nelson, who perceived in Syntax's face the picture of the fatal mischiefs he had occasioned at home. He was now wound up to the highest degree of desperation: as soon, therefore, as his friend had told him

him the fatal particulars, and related the arts by which he had been deceived, which Susan had confessed in a fit of remorse, he the same moment plunged the weapon into her breast; and was going to put an end to his own life, had not Syntax forcibly wrested it from his hand.

The latter then hurried him from the fatal scene, and carried him home in a coach, almost in a state of insensibility, through an excess of grief and despair.

The sight of his injured wife awakened him to a sense of the most wretched state that human nature is capable of feeling.—Falling upon his knees before her bed, he imprecated curses upon his own head.

head.—At that moment the officers of justice entered the house, and hurried him from her presence before she had time to grant him forgiveness.—This last circumstance was too much for him to support: it drove him to a state of distraction, which probably was the means of saving her life; for his wife's severe sufferings, added to the loss of his child, and the dread of an ignominious death, might have driven him to the most fatal design, or killed him of themselves.

Syntax, as before, attended him closely during the continuance of his lunacy; which continued so long, that this faithful fellow almost despaired, as much as his

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M

wife,

wife, of ever seeing him in his right mind.

Heaven, however, who miraculously restored her from the jaws of death, blessed her still more, by restoring him to reason; which, at first, appeared to him like the beginning of a state of bliss: for he could hardly persuade himself, that he was still in a world where he had suffered so much misery.

Having purchased experience at so dear a rate, he would have been blind indeed, if he had fallen again into the like errors. He now perceived the mischiefs that arise from want of confidence in the married life; in which either party ought to have as much confidence

fidence in the other, as to lay open the smallest circumstance that gives them uneasiness. By this means many fatal differences would be prevented, which might happen from mere trifles or groundless suspicions; which, when encouraged, grow stronger and stronger every day, till one is enraged, and the innocent provoked to what would have otherwise been avoided.

Mrs. Spruce's wound happily proved not to be mortal, although it healed but slowly. During that time she saw so much of the errors of her past life, and the gulph into which she was so nearly plunged, that it was the means of her sincere repentance; and to save

M 2. herself

herself from the danger of relapsing again into her former errors, she went to France, where she voluntarily entered into a nunnery; and after the customary time of probation took the veil, and afterwards lived a religious and austere life.

To conclude: Nelson, being once more restored to the arms of his faithful wife, began to taste that happiness, which one like her is capable of conferring. For some time, indeed, his happiness was occasionally broken in upon by melancholy reflections on the consequences of his follies;—the loss of an infant son, and the recollection that he had nearly been the means of sending a guilty soul before

before the awful tribunal of Divine Justice. Mrs. Spruce's recovery, and his wife blessing him afterwards with a fine boy, occasioned these reflections to vanish gradually from his mind, and left him to enjoy the most perfect happiness on earth; that superior felicity, which is only to be found in the society and friendship of an amiable woman in a state of virtuous love.

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